‘ISTA-AAZA
SEEKING ALLAH’S PROTECTION
FROM
SATAN’

BY

Shaeed E Mehrab

Ayatollah

Syed Abdul Hussain Dastghaib

Shirazi

Translated By

Sayed Tahir Bilgrami

The Translators Note

In my early childhood my granny used to tell us that when we had any fear of darkness or we found ourselves in any lonely place, we should recite

Aaoozu billahi min ash Shaitan ir rajeem

She told us that when we recited this, the Shaitan or the evil spirits, if they were around, would run away. She asked us to recite this whenever we came out of our home, while going to school or any other place. She also asked us to say these words before we said:

Bismillahir Rehman ir Raheem,

Before eating our food or commencing any work. Later on, during our theology classes at the school I learnt about the basics of Ista-Aaza.

Recently I have read a compendium of transcripts of 30 lectures, Sermons, given by the Shaheed e Mehrab Ayatolla Dasteghaib Shirazi. The erudite scholar has very skillfully encompassed all the aspects of Ista-Aaza drawing references from the authentic traditions and the Holy Book. Without going into the technicalities, which are for the scholar and the researcher to delve in, the Ayatollah has given a very apt explanation of the concept for the layman to understand. What really surprises me is that every individual Muslim, from the very childhood, gets used to seeking, Ista-Aza --- Allah's Protection against the machinations of the Satan. This is done as a force of habit cultivated through the instruction of the elders at home. But the details of the need for doing it are known to but a few.

A reading of the transcripts of the 30 lectures convinced me that they must be available to as wide a group of Muslims as possible.

Hence this translation! I pray to Allah that the translation gets published, gets widely circulated, and the Ajr goes to the Shaheed Dasteghaib. Insha Allah!

THE PREFACE

Real protection can come only from the Force that is all Pervading!

This work of Hazrat Shaheed e Mehraab Ayatollah Dasteghaib is presented under the title and style of *"Ista-aaza.* As is very evident from the title, the subject of the presentation is about seeking Allah's Protection against the maneuverings of the Satan. With his high learning and knowledge of the Verses of the Holy Book and the Traditions of the Infallibles of the Prophet's Family, he has delivered as many as thirty-five lectures on the intricate subject. He has elucidated the five aspects of *Ista-aaza,* namely piety or *taqwa*, Remembrance of Allah or *Zikr,* resignation on the wishes of Allah or *Tawakkal,* honesty of purpose or *Iqlas* and humility in supplication or *Tazarro.* The Ayatollah's discourses on these topics are highly illuminating and interesting for those who peruse them. To support his arguments, the author referred to the Verses, Traditions and tales with great skill. He has presented the facts in a very lucid language that the readers of all intellectual levels understand what he has conveyed to them.

The fact that has to be recognized is that the Ayatollah was the people's guide (*Marja e Khalaeq)* in his lifetime and therefore the world mourned him at the time of his martyrdom and thereafter too. The great works of the martyred Ayatollah are like the petals of a fragrant flower. These publications people have been buying for themselves and to gift to friends for deriving benefit from their reading.

The Martyr was himself a true practitioner of *Ista-aaza.* Throughout his life he struggled against the baser instincts *(nafs e ammara*) and to practice self-denial. This struggle of his was against the machinations of the Satan. In this struggle he was victorious. Therefore he introduces the Satan to his audiences in a very lucid and effective manner. He gives to the audience the ways of protecting themselves and seeking Allah's Help to this end. The talks in this compendium are studded with thought provoking references. They are so interesting that the narrative retains the interest of the reader throughout the narrative and doesn't tire them for a while! The interest increases as one makes progress with the reading!

I remember that once when an offset technician was photographing one of the Ayatollah's books, he got engrossed in reading the contents. He has himself confessed that he was lost so much in reading the book that he forgot that the

time for the closure of the studio that day had already come. Throughout the day he had not photographed even a page of the book! He said that on later days too, many a time he got engrossed in the contents of the book during the process of photographing it.

O Allah! Keep the Martyr's spirit under the shadow of Your Munificence and also bless the spirit of his grandson with those of other martyrs!

Sayed Mohammed Hashim Dastghaib

05-12-1360

24-02-1982

THE FIRST TALK

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISTA-AAZA IN THE QURAN & THE TRADITIONS

The topic that has received the maximum attention in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (a.s.) and his Vicegerents(a.s.) is *Ista-aaza* or seeking Allah's help to protect one against the maneuverings of the Satan. This is done by saying the words *aa oozu billahi mi ash shaitan ir rajeem.* But it is necessary that one should seek this protection from the depths of one's heart. That is true *Ista-aaza*

To highlight the importance of *Ista-aaza*, Allah says in the Holy Book:

Fa iza qarat al Quran fa ista az billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem

(When you commence reciting the Quran, seek protection from Allah against the accursed Satan)

During a prayer, it is mandated, that after saying the *takbirat al ehraam* (Allah o Akbar) one should say the *Ista-aaza* in a low tone. The commentators are of opinion that the *Ista-aaza* in this situation has to be in a low tone because it will be like the person wishing to keep himself hidden and at the same time escape

from the machinations of the enemy (the Satan)! The pointer is towards the fact that the supplicant should seek protection against his mortal enemy who is waiting for an opportunity to overpower him. This is done best by quietly tapping the door of the Great Place of Succor!

ISTA-AAZA BEFORE COMMENCING A PRAYER

One most important time for *Ista-aaza* is the moment of commencement of a prayer. Whenever a person has to offer prayer to Allah, he should seek protection from Him against *Iblees* who is always bent on misguiding and taking him astray from the right path. *Iblees* makes his utmost efforts to destroy the good deeds of the human being that he is deprived of the rewards that he might earn. Atleast *Iblees,* or Satan, tries to make the person proud or deceitful about prayers.

For example, if one wishes to do the ablutions, he must do the *Ista-aaza* before commencing to do it by asking for Allah's Protection against the accursed Satan. The ablution should be done only after

doing *Ista-aaza*. You must have noticed that many a time the same ablution becomes the Satan's area of operation that he puts many lurking fears or temptations in the mind of the person that make his entire prayer null and void.

Therefore, *Ista-aaza* is one of the most important aspects of prayer that has to be performed in the truest sense, and implicitly, that Allah's protection from the accursed Satan is assured.

ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF ISTA-AAZA

IN PERMISSIBLE AFFAIRS

In permissible (*mustaheb*), or day-to-day, affairs like eating food, drinking water or wearing the clothes, *Ista-aaza* is mandated. For example, at the time of wearing the clothes one should say

Allahumma astarurati wa la tajal alshaitan lahu naseeba

(O Allah keep my private parts hidden and save them from the interference of Shaitan)

In every situation, however lowly and futile, or elevated and likeable, one should seek protection from the Satan. While entering into the mosque, one should do the *Ista-aaza* lest the persistent Satan chases you even at that threshold! Even while going to a washroom it is required to do the *Ista-aaza as follows:*

Allahumma inni a-oozu beka min al khabeesil khabs ar rijs al khabs ash sahaitan ir rajeem

(O Allah I seek Your Protection from the accursed Satan and the defiled impurities)

SATAN AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE MOSQUE

One pious person said that he noticed Satan, in apocalyptic revelation, standing at the threshold of the mosque. He asked him " O accursed one! What are you doing here?" The Satan replied, " Some of my associates have been missed in these environs and I am waiting for them!" The pious person understood that they must be intelligent persons who have gone into the mosque and the accursed Satan was unable to follow them inside. They must have taken care to say the *Ista-aaza before entering the mosque.*

SAYING THE ISTA-AAZA BEFORE STIRRING OUT OF ONE’S HOUSE

Ista-aaza is absolutely essential when one is going out of the residence. At that time Satan awaits for the person outside. One should do the *Ista-aaza* and recite the following supplication at the moment of emerging out of the house:

Bismillahi wa billahi aamanto billahi tawakkalto alallaha wa la haula wa la quwawata illa billa

(In the name of Allah and with His Help I am proceeding on my errand. I have absolute Faith in the Great Allah and there is no power besides Him.

In the Holy Quran it is said with great emphasis that:

Innahu yarakum huwa wa qabeela min haisu la taraunahum inna jaaalnal shaitana auliya lil lazeena la yumenoon

(Shaitan and his group watch your actions intently and you remain oblivious of their activity. You must consider him (the Satan) your enemy because We have made the satans the friend of the faithless.)

Only one thing can save you from Satan the accursed. That is *Ista-aaz.* Besides Allah's Protection there is no way of saving oneself from the machination and subterfuges of the Satan.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM (A.S.) EXHORTED BY ALLAH TO DO ISTA-AAZA

Man wishes to have access to the Presence of Allah but the Satan tries his best to prevent him from achieving this end. He puts so many hurdles and impediments in the way of men that it becomes impossible to reach the desired destination. The one and only way of precluding this risk is to seek Allah's protection against Satan.

Allah has ordered the Prophet (a.s.)

Qul Rabbe aaoozobeka min hamazat il shayateene wa aaoozubeka rabbin yahzaroon

Say O Prophet! 'O Allah! I seek your protection from the fears of the satans and their dominance on my heart and spirit.'

Similarly in the verse "Maoozatain" Allah says

Minsharril waswaasil khannas

Therefore when the enemy is so powerful and strong, we should not be complacent and unmindful of him. We should gather all our faculties and plan to save ourselves by seeking the Protection of Allah. Otherwise, one would find to his surprise that the place where he was prostrating himself for long was, in fact, the Satan's abode and in his ignorance he thought that he was prostrating to god. When, in such a situation, he uttered ' O god!" in actual fact he had been submitting himself to Satan!

WORSHIPPING THE SATAN THE WHOLE LIFE

A fable is narrated in *Muntaqib al Tawareeq.* My mentor, Ustad Ali al Haeri, told in one of his lectures, " In a village of the Isfahan province a rustic villager was in the last throes of his life. The pious person of the village was requested to say the *talqeen,* or pronounce the creed to the dying person to repeat it. During the *talqeen* when the sick person said *la ilaha il Allah* to bear witness to the Unity of Allah, from a corner of the room a sound came—'*Sadaqat abdi-* My creature you say the truth!' When the sick man said, '*Ya Allah-* O God!' Then again the sound came from the same corner of the room,' *labbaek abdi!-* My creature I am here!' The pious person asked, ' Who are you that calls?' The reply was, ' I am the person's creator whom he had worshipped all his life! I am Satan!'

Yes! It is a fact that the man worshipped Satan his entire life. He was always responding to the call of the Satan. His tongue spoke at the Satan's orders. His eyes saw things in response to the Satan's wishes. His heart responded to Satan's wishes. When throughout his life the person was at the beck and call of Satan, then at the time of the *talqeen* whether he said '*Ya Rab*' or *'Ya Iblees'* his respondent can only be Satan. Even if the curtains got raised in the person's last moments, and he was repentant, even then he would get only disappointment! Of what use will be this repentance!

O believers! Try to be steadfast in doing the *Ista-aaza.* Don't underestimate your enemy, the Satan! Don't be under the illusion that only repeating the words '*Aaoozu billahi min al shaitan ir rajeem'* is sufficient. Remember! Unless you understand the purport of these words and mould your actions as per the Commandments of Allah, the *Ista-aaza* will not be of any utility.

DURING QAZAWAT OR DELIVERENCE OF JUSTICE, PRIVACY WITH NA MAHRAM OR STRANGE FEMALES, WHILE IN A FRENZY OF ANGER

In the Traditions of the *Ahl al Bayt,* particular attention is drawn for *Ista-aaza* in the following delicate situations:

- *Qazawat:* The qazi or judge has to say the *Ista-aaza* when he adjudicates a case and gives his judgement.
- *Qilwat ba na-mehram*: When a person is alone with a strange and young woman, it is imperative that he seeks Allah's protection from Satan (*Ista-aaza*) because in such a situation the accursed Satan makes his utmost effort to lead the person astray.
- *Frenzy of anger*: When a person is in a frenzy of anger, his blood boils and the Satan dominates him with full force. Because Satan is created fiery and rare (*lateef*) , he enters into the person of the man with great stealth. We quote here the example of Hazrat Nooh (a.s.) to explain our point. The Satan says, ' In his frenzy of anger a man for me is like a ball in a child's hand!' You must have seen that a child throws the ball whichever way he wants, wherever he wants! In the same Satan overpowers men in frenzy of anger and makes them commit taboo (*haram*) acts. There is no wonder if the Satan makes persons commit acts of *kufr* (*infidelity)* in a frenzy of anger! Only those lucky persons escape from such situations who have Allah's particular Blessing because they say the *Ista-aaza* in such situations.

THE SECOND TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Qul rabbe aaoozubeka min hamazatish shayateene wa aaoozubeka rabbe ain yahzaroon

To summarize the last talk, *momineen* must give importance to *Ista-aaza* and, in accordance with the *Nass-eQurani* (the categorical Quranic Injunction), in all conditions, seek Allah's Protection from the machinations of Satan. The Satan, and his ilk, have never left man to his own scruples, nor will they ever

do it. They always strive to prevent man from doing any good deed. Whenever man tries to do good, they create impediments in his efforts.

In certain circumstances the efforts of the satanic forces are redoubled. These situations are when one delivers justice, when one is alone with a young strange woman and at the moment when a person is in a rage of anger. As illustrated in the previous talk, Satan tries all the subterfuges to destroy the human being.

THE SATAN'S TRAP OR BAIT

This evening we shall consider three good deeds of men that the Satan makes the best efforts to nullify. They are:

- *Ahad :* Promises or resolutions.
- *Nazr :* Or offerings.
- *Sadaqa :* Or charity.

When a person resolves to Allah for performing a certain act and to give a *nazr (*offering) after its fulfillment in accordance with the norms of *fiqh, the Satan* tries all the subterfuges at his command to prevent him from offering the promised *nazr!*

Similarly when one wants to give a *sadaqa* in Allah's way, Satan tries his level best to prevent the person from giving it. It has been oft recorded that when a person puts his hand in his pocket then Satan, and his numerous retainers, cling to the person's hand and put all sorts of fears in his mind. As the Holy Quran warns

Ash shaitan yaadakum al faqra wa yamurukumbil fahsha- Al Baqra 268

The Satan threateneth you with poverty and enjoineth on you sordidness.

They will put a fear in the mind of the person that after doing the charity he will be left with nothing and render him penurious. Sometimes they put a fear in the mind of the person that after doing the charity if he gets some urgent need for personal expense, then from where he will get help! Therefore they persuade the person to refrain from doing charity in the way of Allah.

DON'T BRAG AFTER DOING CHARITY

And, despite everything, one has given a charity, then Satan tries his level best to render the good deed null and void and thus the person doesn't qualify to get

Reward for the good turn. To achieve this end, Satan would use all his skills to persuade the person to publicly brag about his charitable act. For example, Satan will put in the mind of the person to tell to the beneficiary of the charity, ‘ It was I who came to your rescue in time of need! None else would have helped you!’ Or Satan would make him belittle the receiver of the charity by saying, ‘ Take this money now. But please don’t come to me for help again!"

Therefore, Allah categorically says in the Holy Quran:

La tabtalu sadaqatekum bilmanne wal aaza

Render not your charities worthless by obligation and injuries (laid on them)- Al Baqarah 264

In a nutshell, Satan is a mortal enemy of men and always schemes to make their good turns go in vain. Therefore, they too have to render Satan’s mean efforts ineffective!

SATAN SETS HIS SIGHTS ON THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE

In all commentaries, and particularly in *Majma al Bayan,* it is narrated from the Holy Prophet (a.s.) that Satan always has an eye on the heart of a *momin.* When he finds the person busy in prayer, he flees. The Prophet (a.s.) has said, ‘ Satan has put a halter on the hearts of men. But when man remembers Allah, Satan escapes from him. When a person ignores remembrance of Allah, Satan would swallow his heart.’ ‘ Satan plans to swallow the heart of a *momin.* But when the *momin* remembers Allah, Satan runs away from him.’

Satan chases a person till the end. This subject has received great importance in the Holy Book. Allah takes an oath from man that he will not become a follower of Satan. In clear terms Allah has described Satan as the sworn enemy of man:

O progeny of Adam(a.s)! Have we not warned you not to become the followers of Satan. Definitely, he is your open enemy.

Allah has thus forbidden man not to befriend, Satan, his enemy since creation and warned from becoming his follower.

WHAT IS SATAN? WHY HAS HE BEEN CREATED?

Two topics have always been the subjects of discussion--- what is Satan and what is the purpose of his creation? Also, what could be the strategy to save oneself from his machinations and to dispel the fears that Satan creates in the hearts of human beings. These topics need discussion at length, The dissertations on the topics are neither comprehensible for the layman nor are necessary for him. Therefore, they are dealt here in brief to give the basic understanding to the common man.

WHAT IS THE USE OF KNOWING ABOUT SATAN

Researchers are of opinion that if there is fear of a housebreak in a neighborhood, then the person with good commonsense would look for as many persons as possible to confront the brigands. He will also ensure that the doors and windows are securely locked from inside the house. He will place suitable hurdles on the way by which the burglars might access the house. But, to the contrary, if the person spends lot of time in investigating about the brigands about their numbers instead of fortifying his place, it might become too late to meet their assault.

Therefore, what is necessary for you is to find the ways of guarding against Satan. Trying to find out about his creation, his ways of creating fears in the human beings would be a purposeless exercise. The duty of a person is to guard against Satan in all events.

Now that the *Muqbir e Sadiq* (the Truthful Messenger) has informed that Satan is the sworn enemy of the humans since creation of man, you should not waste time in futile talk and, instead, search for ways of warding him away.

However, since these questions about Satan are oft repeated, the matter is dealt here in brief:

SATAN HAS BEEN CREATED WITH FIRE AND IS A RARE CREATURE

Although man is mad of the four elements---- fire, water, soil and air---- but the content of soil is prominent in his make-up. This gives volume and weight to the human body. Therefore the power of comprehension and action in a human being are limited.

Contrary to this, Satan is made of fire, with the fire and air being predominant components in his make-up. Therefore Satan is absolutely rare (*lateef*) and light and, therefore, has a very wide range of actions and mobility in his control.

Man thinks that he has great faculties at his command but Satan has such incredible capabilities that he can become so small as to easily pass through a tiny crevice. He can also become so huge as to entirely encompass a vast place! The distances that a man can travel over a month with difficulty, Satan can traverse in the time taken to blink the eyes once! The heavy weights that man is incapable of lifting, Satan can lift effortlessly!

In *Surat al Naml* Allah has made a reference towards this fact while narrating the story of Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.) the throne of Bilqees:

Qaala ifreetum min al jinna ana aateeaka behi qabla an taqooma mim maqaamek wa inni alaihi laqawi un ameen

Said an audacious one among the jinn' I will bring it unto thee ere thou risest up from thy place; for verily I am strong (enough to do it) and I am (also thy) trusted one.'

SATAN CAN SEE US

There is an objection that if Satan exists, then why men are unable to see him? This is an invalid objection. Human eyes cannot see rare things. They can only visualize things that have volume. Can we see the air that is absolutely rare. Can we see the waves of the wind, although we feel them blowing. The human eye is made of soil and it can only see the voluminous things. Therefore the Holy Quran says:

Innahu yarakum huwa wa qabeelau min haisu laa taraunahum

He and his troops look at you from such a place where you cannot see them.

Yes! At certain times the satans can make themselves visible to people. Many prophets such as Hazrat Nooh (a.s.), Hazrat Yahya (a.s.), Hazrat Mohammed

(a.s) and many men of high piety have seen Satan and even now some pious persons must be there who have this experience.

THE CREATION OF SATAN & THE FELICITY OF MAN

As far as the purpose for Satan's creation, the Omnipotent Allah creates whatever He desires to. The raison d'être (*hikmat)* for creation of Satan requires a detailed discussion which will be out of place here. But, in a nutshell, the creation of Satan (and his ilk) is to test the felicity of the human beings. When men ward away the subterfuges of Satan, they ear a place in the Heaven and those who are misled by him, will be Hell bound!

Allah has ordered men to do charity. Satan asked people not to do charity lest their horde of wealth diminishes! Those who have wisdom and strong faith snub Satan and tell him,' Allah says:

Wa ma anfaqtum min shai in fahua yaqlaqhu wa huwa khair ur raazeqeen

Whatever you spend, We shall replenish. We are the Best of Providers.

If you are steadfast in determination and patience like a mountain, then wisdom and knowledge will take you to such a place that it becomes evident if you were irresolute, the Satanic fears would sway your feet! It is the existence of Satan that proves the felicity of men of piety and wisdom who are steadfast despite all the stratagems of the accursed one!

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION OF SATAN IS TO PUT MEN TO TEST

We all talk of Allah and the Day of Judgement. But do we really have a strong faith is a moot question! It is only Satan (and his ilk) that is a touchstone for testing the humans.

If you take Allah's name with implicit faith, then why you don't have confidence in His promises. If, unfortunately, you have accepted the fears that Satan has put in you mind, then you will be rendered a *momin* only in the namesake. If you have a strong belief in the existence of the Heaven, then why you don't make a sincere effort to earn a place in it! Why don't you try to avoid going to the Hell as Retribution for the evil deeds committed under the spell of Satan!

Wa ma kaana lahu alaihim min sultanin illa lenalama mai yaumenu bil aakhirate mimman huwa minha fi shak

And there is not for him any authority over them , save that We would know (distinguish) him who believeth in the hereafter, from him who is in doubt concerning it.--—-Saba 21

You see that a particular lady has claims of piety. Satan approaches her in the garb of a human being and says, ‘ Madam! You have become old-fashioned and retrograde! You have covered yourself in such a clumsy *chadar* (shawl)’. When you happen to see the lady a second time, she will not look much different from gentlemen! Satan creates such doubts, fears and changes in the human beings.

Definitely, the purpose of the creation of Satan is to test the human beings as to their determination to be steadfast on the right path. Those who are fickle minded and susceptible to be led astray by Satan are also tested by Satan! Thus Allah gets a proof of who is *momin (*pious) and who is *fajir* (hypocrite.)

ALLAH’S PROMISE & SATAN’S PROMISE

It is a human failing that man gives more credence to Satan’s promises. Satan prevents him from spending in the way of Allah by creating unfounded fears in his heart. The thought is generated in the man’s mind that what he would do if a more important need for expenditure arises soon and he would be without the money that he was giving for the good cause now. .

But man forgets Allah’s promise and goes back on spending on good causes. He remains in the service of Satan and is carried away, spending huge amounts for name and fame, hearing his name mentioned on the radio, television and the newspapers!

When Allah exhorts people to be kind to their poor neighbors, needy relatives and to help them monetarily, they make an excuse that their financial status doesn’t permit doing any such charity. But when Satan dictates about expense on worldly activities, they spend without giving a second thought!

ALLAH’S CALL & THE CALL OF SATAN

Satan has been created with the sole purpose of testing the human beings. He encourages opening of cinema houses and trains satanic men and entangles the two- legged animals in his bait.

Doesn't the call of '*Haiaalal falah'* (come for the good act) emanate from the mosque in the vicinity of cinema halls at the time of *Maghrib* Prayer? These two situations are in the immediate neighborhood of each other to test the people as to who are righteous and who are going astray!

Who knows/ The Day of Reckoning might be tomorrow! For that Day the right to get Reward and Retribution is being earned by men today!

SATAN NEVER THRUST HIS WILL ON PEOPLE FORCIBLY

Satan can never force anyone to do misdeeds. He has no such faculties. He can only operate through creating doubts in the minds of persons and tempting them to go astray with his subterfuges. Satan says' *Wa ma kaana alaikum min sultan- I have no suzerainty over you!'* The Satan's job is only to create doubts and fears in the human mind. If a person goes to the mosque, it is with his own conviction and decision. When he goes to the cinema theatre, it is his own choice and decision. It is the fault of the man who is tempted by Satan to make decisions that make him a sinner. On the Day of Judgement when people surround Satan and blame him for leading them astray, he will give a simple and clear reply that he did not drag them into the Hell. They had themselves decided to act the way they did! Satn would then ask men to curse themselves rather than cursing him!

Wa ma kaana li alaikum min sultanin illa an dawatukum fa astajabtum li fala talumooni wa loomuwa anfusakum

I had no authority over you except I called you and ye responded unto me: so blame me not but (rather) blame yourselves.

THE THIRD TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Wa qul rabbe aoozu beka min hamazaatil shayateen wa aaoozu beka rabbe ain yahzaroon

And say thous ' O my Lord! I seek refuge unto Thee from the (evil) prompting of the satans' ' I seek refuge unto Thee O my Lord! From their access to Me.'---Al Muminun 97,98

THE JEALOUS NATURE OF IBLEES

Because of his jealous nature, Iblees has been exiled from the Heaven. He cannot bear man, whom he thought inferior in comparison to himself, attaining nearness to Allah. Satan has expressed to Allah, ' You have made me with fire and have created Adam (a.s.) with soil. Fire is superior to soil and your ordering me to prostrate before Adam (a.s) is gross injustice!'

Despite all this, man reaches august position and Satan has been repudiated by Allah thus,' Get away from here! You are inferior and contemptible. You have no right to brag about your superiority here!'

The human being wishes to achieve nearness to the Creator through prayer. But Satan tries with all his faculties and stratagems to create hurdles in the way of the person's progress towards the goal. This he does to satisfy his instinct of jealousy. Satan is such an accursed creature that if he is unable to cause major impediments to the efforts of the person, he will satisfy himself even with small disturbances to the man. For example, if Satan is unable to turn a person into an infidel or hypocrite, he will satisfy himself with making the person commit lesser sins.

JEALOUS & PROUD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE HEAVEN

Hazrat Ameer al Momineen (a.s.) says in the *Sermon of Qazeaa* in the *Nahj al Balagha*:

‘ O people! Satan has rendered himself accursed because of his jealousy. Beware, you too might get involved in jealousy meet the same fate as Satan. Allah banished Satan from the Heaven because of his jealousy. He earned the displeasure and ire of Allah because of his pride and jealousy. How will you expect to achieve Heaven if you too are proud and jealous! When the mentor of the angels, Iblees, was sent out of the Heaven because of his pride and jealousy, how can ordinary mortals like you dream of entering the Heaven if they practice these undesirable traits. "

Satan was busy supplicating to Allah for long years but for one act of pride he earned the displeasure of Allah to be banished from the Heaven for all time. It must be remembered, therefore, that pride and greatness is only for Allah! Allah says,’ Magnificence and Greatness only suit Me! You humans! What use your bragging? Conceit and pride are not your raiment. Talking big doesn’t suit you. All men in the eyes of Allah are beggars and needy. Allah says,’ Worship Me that there is no god other than Me!’

If man becomes proud and conceited, he will become a partner of Satan!

THE WISH F IBLEES FULFILLED

It is narrated that when Satan was ordered out of the Heaven, he submitted to Allah in the following manner:

‘ O Allah! What has happened to my supplications offered over a long span of seven thousand years?’

Allah replied, ‘ We shall reward you what you ask for as a compensation for your prayers.’

Satan said, ‘ O Allah! Give me respite till the Day of Judgement.’

Allah replied, ‘ You are given the respite!’

Satan said, ‘ My second wish is that I am given the faculty to create doubts and fears in the hearts of the human beings.’

This wish of Satan too was also granted. In granting this wish Allah had a strategy in view.

Hazrat Adam (a.s) beseeched Allah thus,’ O Creator! You have not only provided respite to this formidable enemy of my progeny till the Day of Judgement, you have also given him faculty to cause fears and temptations in the hearts of poor progeny! They will be helpless at the mercy of Satan!

Allah said, ‘ O Adam (a.s.)! Don’t be disturbed! With every Satan there will be an angel created by us., These angels will help your progeny to guard against the trap set by Satan.’

THE ANGELS TOO HAVE POWER OF INSPIRATION (ILHAAM)

Whenever Satan creates doubts in the hearts of men, the angels inspire virtue in their heart. Satan says, ‘ Don’t go to the mosque!’ The angel encourages the person to go there. Satan encourages the person to commit certain sins that he can make reparation later on. The angel says that the person might die before he expresses his repentance for the sins. And even if he expresses repentance there is no guarantee of acceptance by Allah.

Give attention to your own hearts! Whether there are thoughts of good or of evil in your heart, you will always have doubts about these thoughts! When Satan upbraids you to commit a sinful act, the angels guide you against it. If Satan tries to prevent you from doing a good turn, the angels encourage you to go ahead with it.

AT THE CROSS-ROADS

Man is therefore at the cross-roads! Either he loses himself in the valley of greed and vanity or is guided by the angels to the path of virtue and salvation. Allah has created man with the faculty of making his own decisions for his actions. Allah has categorically said in the Holy Quran, ‘ Allah is never unjust with men. It is the men who do injustice to themselves.’

Wa ma kaana lillahi leyazlimahum wa lakin an naasa kanu anfusahum yazlemoon

THE DOOR FOR REPENTANCE IS ALWAYS OPEN

Allah has further said,' If We had imposed Iblees over your progeny and has given him respite till the Day of Reckoning, we have kept the doors of repentance open for you progeny too'. If men are caught in the web of the accursed Satan, they can express repentance like their ancestor, Adam (a.s.) and seek forgiveness from Allah. Remember that Adam (a.s.) after doing repentance reached the august status of Prophet-hood and was one of the choicest of Allah. Allah says:

.

In allaha astafa Adam wa Nooha wa aale Ibrahim aale Imran ala aalemeen

Repentant men too can achieve the status of *tawwabeen* (penitents) and become the dear ones of Allah. Allah, as such says:

In Allaha yuhibbul tawwabeen

Allah likes the penitents

ALLAH'S BLESSING IS FOR MEN TILL THE END

All the people of the previous epochs had the doors of repentance open for them. But the conditions for acceptance of their penitence were very severe. It is the felicity of the presence of the Last of Prophets (a.s.) that his people, who are called *the ummat-e-Marhooma,* have a very wide door for repentance available to them. This concession is because their Prophet (a.s.) is *Rehmat lil Aalameen* (the Blessing for All the Worlds) and *Tauba,* and its acceptance, too is one of the aspects of blessing.

Bihar al Anwaar, volume three, quotes a tradition of the Prophet of Islam (a.s.)," Every person who repents for his past sins one year before his death, will be pardoned." Then said," One year is too long a period. If a person repents for his sins a month before his death, he may be pardoned." The Prophet (a.s.)

further added, " One month too is rather a long period. If the person repents a day prior to his death, his sins might be pardoned." The Prophet (a.s.) then said, " A day too is a long time. If the person repents at the moment of death, in the *Barzaq* (the interregnum) or before Izraell looks into his eyes, the person might be pardoned by Allah." It proves that if a Muslim repents even while he is dying, he stands a chance of getting pardoned for his sins.

Blessed is the heart that is busy in the Remembrance of Allah. Can the Blessing be more encompassing than what the Ummat-e-Marhooma has been endowed with. Despite the evil presence of Satan and his temptations to men to commit sins, Allah's Blessings are unfathomable!

HASSAN BASRI ASKS A QUESTION & IMAM ZAIN AL ABEDEEN (A.S.) REPLIES

It is narrated that once during the Haj Hassan Basri said,

Al ajab kul al ajab fa man naja kaif naja

It is surprising how the one who was to be saved, got saved?

It is very surprising that man escapes from the clutches of the powerful Iblees."

This talk of Hassan Basri reached the Imam (a.s.) He said,

"al ajab kul al ajab man halak kaif halak

It is surprising how one who was to get killed, got killed

It is surprising that the unlucky person was deprived of the all pervading Blessing of Allah that spreads over the entire Universe."

ILLNESS BEFORE DEATH IS A BLESSING

After spending a long life the time for departure has come nigh. Perhaps it is the kindness of Allah that men get afflicted with disease and remain in this stage for some time before death. In this time they prepare themselves to meet their Creator. This is, perhaps, the reason that sudden deaths are considered a calamity. One who remains in the deathbed for a period, say a month, and

doesn’t awake to the fact and forgets to express penitence for his past sins before dying will be a very unfortunate person.

THE FOURTH TALK

Bismillahir Rahman ir Raheem

Wa qul Rabbe aoozubeka min hamazaat il shayateene wa aaoozubeka Rabbe an yahdaroon- Al-Mumminun 97/98

Say thou: ‘O my Lord! I seek refuge unto Thee from the (evil) promptings of the satans!’ ‘ I seek refuge unto Thee O my Lord! From their access to me’

THE ONLY WAY TO SAFETY FROM SATAN IS ISTA-AAZA

The fears and hardships that man faces on account of Satan are not hidden from anyone. Everyone knows that Satan is the worst enemy of human beings. He doesn’t leave the men alone till their last breath. His only purpose in the world is to see that man doesn’t profess faith on Allah and the Hereafter. At least, Satan makes every effort to ensure that men veer away from doing good deeds and get attracted to evil acts.

The most important thing is that men make every effort to get rid of Satan and his ilk. But to get rid of such powerful and organized group of enemies is not an easy task. The Holy Quran prescribes the one and only remedy for the situation, that is *Ista-aaza.* There are clear indications in the Book saying,’*Faistaiz billah- Seek Allah’s protection’*, because it is not possible to reach the Truth without doing this.

THE KING’S TENT & THE FEROCIOUS WATCH-DOG

I had cited an example that Satan is like a ferocious dog that lingers at the entrance to the king’s tent. Whenever anyone tries to go to the presence of the king, the dog rushes at him with gnawing teethe. This is such a mean janitor that barring the close friends of the king, none other is safe. Only Allah’s favorites can reach Him without let or hindrance from this enemy. Anyway, to

enter the king's tent we shall have to seek protection from him from the evil dog. There is no other way than seeking Allah's help and protection from the accursed Satan to achieve His nearness! Only Allah's fury can contain the accursed Satan.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to seek Allah's protection that with His attention one can get protection from the mischief of Satan. In this regard the Holy Quran says:

Wa qul aaoozu Rabbaka min hamazat il shayateene wa aaoozubeka Rabbe an yahdaroon

Say! O Habib! 'O Lord! I seek Your protection from the fears caused by the satans on my heart and soul!'

Particularly in privacy and loneliness, saving oneself from the fears and temptations created by Satan is rather difficult. In such a situation one must call:

'Ya ghayas al mustagheeseen

Ya malaaz al laaezeen

O listener of the plaint of the plaintiff

O provider of succor to the refuge seeker!

Save me from the machinations of Satan.' If there is no protection of Allah, one cannot save himself from the onslaught of Satan's subterfuges.

ISTA-AAZA SHOULD EMANATE FROM THE HEART AND NOT MERELY FROM THE LIPS

To gauge the reality of Ista-aaza, only saying *aaoozu billahi min as Shaitan ir rajeem* or saying its translation in one's own language is absolutely insufficient. Ista-aaza is a meaningful and spiritual condition that is conveyed by the words noted above. If Ista-aaza is prompted from the heart of the person, then only it will be effective. Otherwise, just uttering the words would make one the play-thing of Satan

THE THREE TYPES OF ISTA-AAZA

There are three ways the *Ista-aaza* is done:

1. There are persons who neither have the right spirit of doing *Ista-aaza* nor are they aware of the meaning of the words of *Ista-aaza.* But, all the same, as a force of habit, they utter the words: *aaoozu billahi min al shaitan ir rajeem.* Unless the *Ista-aaza* comes with feelings, understanding and from the heart, it becomes a satanic joke!
2. There are persons who know the meanings and purport of the words of *Ista-aaza* and are capable of saying them properly, but they haven't the right feelings in their heart and also their actions are in obedience of Satan. Such *Ista-aaza* will be for Satan rather than a submission to Allah for His protection against Satan!
3. There is a third group of persons who say the words of *Ista-aaza* from the depths of their hearts and are fully aware of their meaning, purport and spirit. These persons will be fully aware of the Greatness and Omnipotence of Allah. The *Ista-aaza* of these persons will always get the accepted by Allah.

SEEKING PROTECTION IN ALLAH'S OBEDIENCE

The deity of the sinners and Allah's disobedient persons is always the Satan. Such persons might curse Satan a thousand times to make a hypocritical show to others. To put the matter in more precise words, such persons outwardly say *aa oozu billahi min al shaitan ir rajeem* but their character is such that they make false allegations against others, use abusive language, trifle with the self-respect of others and reveal others' confidences. Such persons don't refrain from committing any minor or major sin and all the same utter the words of *Ista-aaza!* In practice their *Ista-aaza* becomes *'aa oozu bish shaitan min al Rehman*, that would mean seeking protection of Satan to escape from Allah (*Naoozu billah).* On the lips of such persons are the words that in obedience to Allah they are seeking His protection, but their actions are all contrary to His Commandments. When the curtains of ignorance are raised from the hearts of such persons, they realize that all the time it was Satan who prompted them to utter the words *aa oozu billah* to ridicule their weak faith !

A SATANIC BOOK TO REFUTE SATAN

It is said that a scholar of some repute thought of writing a book to warn the people about the treacherous and mean acts of Satan. During the same period a pious person met Satan in a state of apocalyptic revelation. He told to Satan, " O accursed creature! The time has come for your exposure! Such-and-such a maulana is will very soon writing a book about your nefarious acts!" Satan smiled derisively and said, " You are involved in a misunderstanding! This book is being written at my instance!" The pious person asked, " How is it possible?" Satan replied, " I had put doubts in the heart of the scholar that he is a person of high repute and he should make a show of his erudition. The person doesn't realize that although he has titled the book as ' Refutation of Satan', but his real intent is to make a show of his erudition and achieve name and fame!"

In this way Satan tempts people to curse him and make them involuntarily utter' *aa oozu billahi min al shaitan ir rajeem'.*

THE POLITICS OF THE IMPERIALIST FORCES

The imperialist regimes maintain their agents in their settlements who are their instruments for attainment of the imperialistic ends. At certain times, for the sake of their political compulsions, they instruct the agents to criticize and abuse them, their imperialistic masters! All this is done as a camouflage for their nefarious political reality.

How wonderful is Satan's politics! He has the distinction of being the first politician ever! Satan can no doubt be called the mentor and leader of politicians of all times. Politics, in other words, means working behind the backs of the people. Satan, in this way, fools everyone and doesn't leave behind any footprints. The evil acts are committed by people at Satan's provocation, but they never realize that he is behind their actions!.

ISTA-AAZA IS FOR ESCAPE FROM SINS

"O Allah! Give us courage to keep away from Satan, prevent ourselves from sinning and avoid committing crimes". This *Ista-aaza* with Allah keeps us away from sins and reins our tongues from abusive and harmful talk. Instead of using abusive language in anger, we should rather say *aaoozu billa* at such times of provocation! It is always advisable to seek Allah's protection and help against the machinations of Satan. In other words, the meaning of *aa oozu billa* is:

aa oozu be taa-at illah min taa-at il shaitan

I seek to come in the protection of Allah and escape from the evil of Satan

KEEPING THE HAND IN THE TIGER'S MOUTH AND TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM IT WITH ONE'S FEET

If a person keeps his hands in the mouth of a tiger and cries that he is very scared of the tiger and seeks the safety of an invincible fort to save himself from the animal attacking him! This is like the person who keeps crying for protection from Satan but is, in fact, submissive to and under his evil spell.

As long as a person uses foul language, he is the follower and slave of Satan. In this condition his cursing Satan will be a stark lie. One should seek Allah's forgiveness (*astaghfar)* for the *Ista-aaza* that he had done hypocritically!

The *Ista-aaza* of a foul-mouthed person, in the eyes of men of piety (*irfaan*) is tantamount to saying *aaoozu bish shaitan,* because he sometimes says *aaooz* and at others *la haul,* but his actions prove his falsehood.

If a tiger is chasing you, you will try to run into a fortified place of safety rather than going near it and putting your hands into it's mouth and keep shouting for help. Similar is the reality of *Ista-aaza.* It is seeking Allah's succor against Satan in His strong fortification!

A TRUE DREAM AND SATAN'S TREACHERY

A DISCIPLE OF Sheik Ansari has said that when he was studying under him, one night he saw the accursed Satan in a dream. Satan was carrying some bridles in his hand. He asked Satan," Why are you holding these bridles in your hand?' He replied, " I put them in the necks of people and drag them! Yesterday I put a bridle around the neck of one Sheik Murtada Ansari and dragged him out of his house into the lane. But he escaped from me from the middle of the lane and returned home!"

When he awoke in the morning, he went to the Sheik and related to him the dream. The Sheik said, " Satan has told you the truth. The accursed one did try to tempt me with his glib talk. In fact, at home we needed certain things and I had no money handy at the time. I thought that from the *Sahm e Imam* I had with me a copy of the Holy Quran. I thought that I would sell it and use the money for my need as a loan to be reimbursed later. I took the copy of the Quran and went into the lane. While buying my needs a thought came to me

why I was doing such a thing. I felt penitent, returned home and put back the copy of the Quran in its original place.

This incidence is quoted from the biography of the Sheik " *Seerat wa Shaqsiat sheik Ansari- pages 88-89*)

Some other persons have related the same incident in the following manner:

When the Sheik's disciple saw the bridles in the hands of Satan, he noticed that one of the bridles was very strong and thick. When he asked the accursed Satan the reason for his carrying the bridles, he replied that they were for putting around the necks of people and dragging them. The person also asked, " For what purpose is the stronger and thicker bridle?" Satan replied, " This is for your mentor, Sheik Ansari. Yesterday I put it round his neck and dragged him into the bazaar. But he managed to free himself and escaped.' The person asked, " Which one of the bridles is for me?" Satan replied, " For you there is no need of a bridle. You can become my victim only with my sweet talk!"

THE FIVE ASPECTS OF ISTA-AAZA

THE FIFTH TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taaefun min al shaitane tazakkaru fa iza hum mubseroon

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from the Satan afflicteth them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They are forthright.—Al-Aaraf 201

THE MEANING SHOULD BE MANIFESTED BY THE WORDS

Ista-aaza is one of the important one of the important aspects of the faith and is obligatory on every Muslim. As already been mentioned, earlier, it should be from the depths of the heart of the person and not just the repetition of the words through the mouth. Quran wants people to---*fa astaiz billah*--- seek Allah's protection. This means that the words should not be repeated as a force

of habit like the parrots. The reality requires one to seek freedom from the accursed Satan and submit to Allah for His help. If these two objectives are achieved, then the *Ista-aaza* is really *Ista-aaza*! Otherwise it will just be an exercise in futility. In a nutshell, when the words of the *Ista-aaza* are uttered, it should be in the true spirit required of him.

When we consider carefully the spirit of *Ista-aaza,* we find that it has five well-defined aspects: 1.*Taqwa* or piety.2.*Tadakkar* or remembrance of Allah. 3. *Tawakkal* or trust in Allah. 4. *Iqlas* or sincerity. 5. *Aajizi* or humility towards Allah.

When all these four aspects are practiced by a person, his *Ista-aaza* will be accepted by Allah. Then the accursed Satan will remain a long distance away from the person whether he says *aaoozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem* or not. In other words, when Satan comes to a *momin* he becomes scared of man as an ordinary human being gets scared of the company of Jinns.

SATAN RUNS AWAY FROM THE MEN OF PIETY

The examples of aspects of *Ista-aaza* are briefly explained from the Holy Quran.

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taaef min al shaitan tazakkar wa afahum mubseroon

When the men of piety have any fear from Satan, then they busy themselves in prayer and they instantaneously get enlightened.

Therefore, the very first condition for keeping oneself safe from form Satan is to become pious. Those who adopted piety, busy themselves in prayer whenever they fears of Satan in their hearts. They get enlightened that Satan created the fears. They also realize that because of their prayer Satan had fled and that they are in the protection of Allah. The *ayat* mentioned above is a pointer to the believers towards adoption of piety and remembrance of Allah.

NEED FOR TRUST ON ALLAH

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"*Wa iz qarat al Quran fa astaiz billah min al shaitan ir rajeem. Innahu laisa lahu sultanun alal lazeena aamanu wa ala rabbehim yaywakkalun"*

" *While reciting the Quran seek Allah’s protection from the accursed Satan./ O believers! On those who trust (tawakkal) in Allah, Satan has no influence or control."- An-Nahl-98 &99*

One who has trust in Allah , Shaitan will have no control on him. Satan can influence only those who who don’t trust on Allah and all their confidence is on material and worldly aspects of their lives. If the same person has trust on Allah, then Satan becomes helpless in his maneuvers.

When a person doesn’t trust Allah from the depths of his heart, then all his pleadings for protection will be of no avail. According to the verse quoted above, Satan would gain ascendance over him. In the later verse of the Quran there is a reference towards this aspect:

"innma sultanahu alal lazeena yatawal launahu wal lazeena hum behi mushrikoon

"Verily, his authority is only over those who befriend him and those who associate others with Him"- An-Nahl 100

One who has forgotten the Munificent Allah and befriended Satan, he has no concern for *Ista-aaza* or seeking protection from Satan.

SATAN HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SINCERE PEOPLE

Another important aspect of *Ista-aaza* is sincerity. This saying of Satan is recorded in the Holy Quran:

Qala beizzateka laghwainahum ajmaeena ala ibadeka minhum al mukhliseen"

By Your Honor O Sustainer! Excepting your sincere creatures, I shall tempt (lead astray) everyone else."

The purport of sincerity (*Iqlas)* has been explained at various places in the Holy Quran. As the need arose, we have referred to this aspect in our talk and there is further need to stress on this aspect.

Thus it is established that the *Ista-aaza* of only the persons sincere to Allah is appropriate. Since Satan has no influence on such persons they are those who escape from his machinations.

DO WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PIETY (TAQWA) AND RMEMEBRANCE (TAZAKKAR) OF ALLAH

After living long years we have not drawn any benefit from knowledge of the Faith. May Allah protect us from compounded ignorance (*Jahl e Murakkab).* We have earlier said that the first aspect of *Ista-aaza* is *Taqwa* or piety. One who has not adopted *taqwa,* will not be able to escape from Satan. Only with piety one can keep out of the clutches of Satan.

A woman who can come to the bazaar wearing indecent dress is satanic from head to toe! And the man who chaperons such a woman in public can never escape from the attention of Satan.

It goes to prove that one who doesn't save himself from the illegitimate (*Haram)* can never prevent himself from the influence of Satan.

If a person dwells in a usurped house, he cannot escape from the Satan unless he quits the occupation of that house. If a person is in habit of doing taboo things, he cannot do *Ista-aaza.*

ILLEGITIMATE SUSTENANCE IS THE BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT IN THE WAY OF ISTA-AAZA

Thhe important aspects of *Ista-aaza* are absolute piety and total abstinence from taboo things. Having taboo (*Haram*) food renders the entire body of the person satanic. He becomes attached to Satan because Satan's blood flows in the veins of the person.

The tongue with which such a person says *aa oozu billahi min al shaitan ir rajeem,* is in fact, the tongue of Satan. The reason for this is that the person has drawn nutrition from satanic food.

Shaheed eTaani (Martyr the Second) says in '*Israr as Salath'* that the Prophet of Islam (a.s.) has said," Allah sees your hearts and not your faces"

This proves that mere talking and arguing might have some effect on people but for Allah nothing has any weight other than the absolute facts.

Therefore, about the sacrifices that we make in the way of Allah, the Holy Book categorically says:

" The meat and the blood of these sacrifices doesn’t reach Allah. The only things that reaches Him is your Taqwa (piety)."

UNTIL THE LAST VESTIGES OF HARAM ARE NOT REMOVED ISTA-AAZA IS NOT POSSIBLE

As long as even one morsel of *haram* food is in the body of a person, he is himself like the Satan. Beating drums seeking protection from Satan is his hypocrisy. As long as he is not able to shake away the influence of Satan from his person, all his prayers are mere pretences.

About *rizq-e-halal* (legitimate food) there are several traditions of *Ahl al Bayt (a.s.)*. *Rizq e Halal* is like a seed on which the quality of the plant will depend. Care must beexertcised pure and good seed to ensure the health and sturdiness of the tree.

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"Ya ayyuhal naas kulu min al tayyebate ma razaqnakum wa la attabaoo qutuwat ash shaitan"

O people! Eat pure and halal food and don’t tread the footprints of Satan. "

ABSTAIN FROM DOUBTFUL FOOD

When one has doubt about the food being *halal,* he should rather abstain from eating it. Avoid using *haram* food and clothes. The use of these will have such deleterious effect on the person that he becomes the victim of fears and doubts.

THE SIXTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taaefun min ash shaitane tazakkaru wa fa za hum mubseroon"

"Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from the Satan afflicteth them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see (aright)"

A summary of the discussions of the previous evenings is that the main purpose is to escape from the clutches of Satan and attain the protection of Allah. The main plank for achieving this is *taqwa* or piety. Abstention from Satan is possible when a person implicitly follows the mandated practices and avoids *haram* acts. If the person is careless about these things, then escape from Satan is impossible. His example will be like that of a person who is willfully combating with a wild animal but keeps crying that he wished to escape from its clutches.

Keep reiterating – *"aa oozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem"*—" I wish to escape from Satan and come under the protection of Allah", but if you are unaware of the aspects of *Ista-aaza,* and therefore are not complying with them, then the entire exercise will be futile.

Innal lazeena attaqau : The people who are in the process of escaping from sinful acts, and Satan tries to overwhelm them, they instantaneously busy themselves in the remembrance of Allah. With the felicity (*baraka)* of this act, the curtains of thoughtlessness are raised from their eyes and they comprehend the evil schemes of Satan very clearly. Thus they are able to save themselves from the evil bait of Satan.

It is only the persons of piety who are able to save themselves from the effects of Satan. Otherwise, the evil influence of Satan is always around!

We have mentioned that piety is a very important tool concerning our food habits. Our food, or nutrition, is like the seed of plants. The type of food one takes nourishes good or satanic tendencies in a person. If the seed is satanic, then the body acquires evil tendencies. If a *haram morsel* goes down the throat, then the control over the body will come into the hands of Satan. Till the time that morsel remains in the body, Satan too will occupy it.

It is mentioned in the traditions that eating one *haram morsel* of food, the effects will remain in the body for forty days and, during this period, the prayers of the person may not be answered.

WE ARE HELPLESS & POWERLESS

If someone gives a serious thought to the facts he would cry out," *Amman mujeeb al muztar—O Allah! What shall we do"* The foods we consume take us to darkness. There is no light in them that can give nourishment to our spirits. Our tongues too are influenced by these foods that we utter falsehoods and abusive language. We indulge in misguiding games and play. Backbiting has become our habit. All our limbs and organs have been exposed to the effects of *haram* and unsavory (*makrooh)* foods. The body has therefore become insensitive to the instinct of remembrance of Allah. The limbs and organs have thus turned into the playthings of Satan.

THE PURITY OR OTHERWISE OF FOOD

One type of *haram food* is *najis* (impure) food. If impure food goes down the throat, Satan will transmit his effect throughout the body.

Even babes in arms should not be fed with *najis food.* One should not think that a child is innocent and free from the incidence of the rules of *Shariah.* Remember, the adults are bound with the requirements of the *Shariah* and it is their duty to take care to nourish their children with pure food. When a child is brought up on *najis* food, he will develop negative and un-Islamic tendencies as he grows up. It is to be borne in minds that only animals can take *Najis food.*

The occasion when one is required to abstain even from *Halal food* is when he is fully sated and can eat no more at that moment. Over-eating is a taboo and a satanic trait.

IDENTIFY THE HARAM MORSEL OF FOOD

A thing that comes to you in an illegitimate manner is *haram* or taboo. If one acquires bread by cheating someone or he has usurped it from someone, or has bought it from the proceeds of usury, or has consumed without the knowledge or permission of the rightful owner, then he has contravened the rules of *Shariah.* This is a *haram* act.

The next in line of impure foods is the *murdar* or the meat of an animal that has not been slaughtered properly as required by the *Shariah.* This applies also to

those animals eating of whose meat is permissible in the Islamic *Shariah.* For example, if a person, while slaughtering an animal, doesn't intentionally say the words *Bismillah* before putting the knife to the throat of the animal, eating of such meat is taboo. Allah says in the Holy Quran, "*Don't eat that thing on which Allah's name has not been uttered".* Therefore if a *halal* animal is slaughtered without saying *Bismillah,* consumption of such meat is forbidden.

Syed Taoos has recommended application of this verse to all foods, although the verse pertains only to animal foods. Syed Taooks says," All the eatables that are prepared without taking the name of Allah before commencing the preparation, I don't partake of! How can a *momin* eat the bread that has been cooked by the baker without taking the name of Allah."

THE BAKERS OVEN & SATANIC TUNE

Times have changed in a funny way. If Syed Tawoos was living today, he would recall the days when the baker would come to the oven and recite the *Hadeet e Kisa* and offer prayer before commencing his work. Today the bread is baked listening to blaring music! They cook the bread accompanied by satanic music. We consume those morsels infused with satanic temperament!

THE SEVENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taaefum min ash shaitane tazakkaru fa iza hum mubseroon- Al-ARAF 7.201

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from the Satan afflicteth them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see (aright)

BE SATAN'S ANTAGONISTS

We have said that till a person doesn't maintain a distance from Satan, the true spirit of *Isti-aaza* will not manifest in him. The person who indulges in sinning is Satan's subordinate. Allah says:

Fattakhazuhu adu-un

Deem him your enemy

He is your enemy from the beginning. You too should reciprocate with enmity. Don't befriend him. But if you commit sins, it will be obedience to your enemy, the Satan. And obedience is a component of friendship. Always beware that your treacherous enemy is keeping an eye on you. No man is safe from him for a single moment. If you think that you are safe from him, it is nothing but complaisance.

DOES SATAN SLEEP

Someone asked a pious scholar whether it is mentioned in any traditions about Satan sleeping and taking rest. The learned scholar smiled and gave a very interesting reply, " If that accursed creature ever slept, I would have some respite!"

When you sleep, the accursed Satan is fully awake. He never sleeps. He always guards over men and looks for opportunities to bring harm them.

Innahu yarakum huwa wa qabeela min haisu la taraunahum

He, and his retainers, watch over you from such a place that they can see you and you can't see them

YOU MUST REMAIN FORTIFIED

What shall men do, then? When the enemy is so powerful and stealthy and can attack through hidden means, it becomes our duty to become fully armed and fortified against Satan. When the enemy is looking for your slightest fault or negligence, then you too must guard against him fully armed. The ammunition for men against Satan is *taqwa* or piety. Adopt piety to meet the onslaughts of Iblees!

MOMINS ARMS- MUSTAHEBAT (THE NON-MANDATORY PRAYERS) & TARK E MUKROOHAT OR ABSTINENCE FROM UNDESIRABLES

Offering non-obligatory prayers, to the best of one's physical capabilities, is very effective for warding off the enemy, Satan. Similarly, abstaining from doing or using things, although permissible but not desirable, is very useful. *Tark e ghaflat* or avoidance of carelessness too might help.

The more a person is careless of the enemy, Satan, the more he will have the propensity to commit sins. With carelessness one might find himself dangerously near the mouth of a serpent. Despite all the friendship and nearness with Satan, the person will not get any support from him when the time for retribution (*mukafaat)* comes. At that moment Satan will turn away his face as if he never knew the person.

SATAN INTENSIFIES HIS ATTACKS IN STAGES

The initial attempts of Satan will be to tempt the *momin* to commit unsavory things (*makroohaat).* Then he will open the way of the minor sins (*gunahaan e Saghira*) to the person. He puts into the mind of the person that the sins he was committing were very trivial and thus encourages him to inadvertently commit major sins (*Gunahaan e Kabira).* The man himself thinks that he was

committing minor sins, which thought is itself a major sin. (*The books wirtten by Ayatollah Dast e Ghaib, "Gunahaat e Kabira" and " Qalb e Saleem" cover this subject at great length.*) Satan them persuades the person to commit major sins as a habit. In this way he overwhelms the heart and the spirit of the person. He attacks the *momin's* faith and puts him in severe doubts and fears. Thus Satan makes him his helpless prey. He doesn't keep the person capable of comprehending that he is the victim of Satan's plot.

Only the people of *taqwa* (piety), with their effective defences, can save themselves from the maneuvers of Satan. The poor ignorant person cannot meet the onslaught of Satan.

WADHU OR ABLUTION--- THE SHARP INSTRUMENT OF DEFENCE FOR A MOMIN

Of several non-obligatory things that can come to the aid of a *momin* is to always maintain the state of *wadu. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) says,"* Al wadu aslah al momin! (Wadu is the weapon of a momin!) It is the duty of a *momin* to confront the satans that he is in mortal combat with them. Therefore he must always be clean and with valid *wadu.*

A person should always be with *wadu,* and if some time has passed after performing the ablution, he should renew it as a measure of carefulness that it might have gone void without the person noticing it. It is said, " *Al wadu noor wal wadu alal wadu noor ala noor--- Wadu is a noor or light and performing a wadu over another is a bigger light.* This is the light that dispels the darkness created by Satan in the hearts of the persons.

FASTING AND CHARITY BREAK THE BACKBONE OF SATAN

In the armory of a *momin* there are certain arms about which the Prophet (a.s.) has made a particular mention. The Prophet (a.s.) said:

> " *Fasts of a momin blacken the face of Satan. Sadaqa or charity breaks the backbone of Satan. Istaghfar—entreaty with Allah for mercy—will cut the Satan's vein of life, and love of Allah and good deeds of the person uproot Satan."—Safinat al Bihar, vol 2, page 62*

When you fast the face of Satan, your enemy, will be blackened. If the curtains are raised from your eyes, you will notice that Satan's face has turned black on account of your fasts.

But Satan is not so weak and emaciated that only by fasting you get his face blackened and with a strike of charity you shatter his backbnone. You have to perform every action with absolute sincerity that they pass through the seven curtains and break Satan's backbone and destroy him.

Now let us talk about *Sadaqa* or charity. According to what the Prophet (a.s.) has said, it does break the backbone of Satan. But there is a condition that your charity should be acceptable to Allah.

I HAVE SEEN SATAN'S MOTHER

It is narrated in *Anwaar jazairi* that once during an acute famine a preacher was speaking from the pulpit in a mosque. He said, " If someone wants to give *sadaqa,* seventy satans cling to his hand and try to prevent him from doing the good turn." One *momin* who was seated very near the foot of the pulpit told to his friends with surprise, " What has Satan to do with *sadaqa?* I have some wheat at home. I shall go home just now and bring it to the mosque to give away in charity. I shall see how the satans prevent me from doing it!" The man got up and went home. On reaching home, when his wife became aware of his intention, she shouted at him, " In these days of acute famine you have no care of your wife and children! Perhaps the famine conditions might prolong and we might all die of starvation because of shortage of wheat." Therefore, getting engulfed with doubts the *momin* returned to the mosque empty handed.

The friends asked him, " What has happened. You have returned from home without the wheat? Alas! The seventy satans had clung to your hands and prevented you from doing the sadaqa." The man said, " I didn't see the satans, but definitely I have seen their mother who came in the way of my doing the good deed!"

This proves that man tries to take cudgels with Satan but many a time his wife or others distract him from the good turn.

Sadaqa is also not giving a few coins reluctantly because:

Lun tanalu al birra hatta tunfequ mimma tuhibboon

Never shall ye attain to righteousness until ye give away (in the way of your Lord)—Ale Imran-92

What is your financial position? If you are really affluent, Satan's backbone will not break unless you do a sizeable charity. There will be another condition attached to your charity that you should not brag about it to the beneficiary nor to other friends. Belittling the person who has received your help by reminding of your good deed can render your *sadaqa null and void.*

PENITENCE—ANOTHER WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF A MOMIN

Satan makes all his possible efforts to put man in the morass of sin. But if the man expresses penitence at that time from the depths of his heart, Satan's heart would then shatter into smithereens with disappointment.

But the enemy is very cunning. He strives hard to see that the person fails to reach the threshold of penitence and forgiveness. Satan now infuses an inspiration into the heart of his subject, " What has happened? What big sin you have committed that you are so ashamed! Don't you notice around you that others are committing bigger sins and happily living! You are still young. Even if penitence is necessary, you can do that when you are old. At that time penitence will be ideal that you will be weak and sickly and you may not have strength to break your resolve of penitence. This is the time of your youth. How do you expect to keep your promise of abstinence after expressing penitence?"

TWO POWERFUL WEAPONS TO DEFEAT SATAN

Two more weapons that, according to the Prophet of Allah (a.s.), are most effective in defeating Satan are: Sincere obedience of Allah and steadfastness in doing good deeds. It is a *Jehad e Akbar* when a person, just for the sake of Allah and His friendship, ignores his personal profits and gains. This is better than the *Jehad* fought with the infidels because this is confrontation with *Nafs e Ammara* or the vile personal instincts. If one fails in this *Jehad,* he may not succeed in the other! The cause of the defeat will definitely be the instigation and temptation by Satan. In this defeat the person will not only die but also be given retribution in the Hereafter.

Hazrat Syed e Sajjad (a.s.) says in one of his supplications, " O Allah! I seek you protection from my enemy! O Master of the House! The ferocious dog is attacking me. Come to my rescue and save me from the harm that it can cause to me!"

IBLEES BITES THE FOOT OF IMAM SYED SAJJAD (A.S.)

In *"Madinat al Muajiz"* it is said that Hazrat *Syed al Sajedeen (a.s.)* was busy one day in his prayer. Iblees wanted to cause disturbance to the Imam's concentration. He ordered one of his retainers to disrupt the Imam's concentration by causing him bodily harm. The narrator says that the accursed satan came to the Imam in the shape of a big python. We have already mentioned earlier that satans have the faculty to appear in any shape and form they wish to. Anyway, he went near the Imam (a.s.) who was fully absorbed in his prayer. The accursed creature bit one of the toes of the Imam (a.s.). But the pain of the bite was not felt by the Imam (a.s) nor was his concentration disturbed an iota. At that moment a loud sound of Allah's anger was heard and the accursed creature was punished. Then the Herald said, " *Anta Zain al abedeen--- verily you are the adornment of the pious ones and the source of pride for them"*

WARN PEOPLE AGAINST THE SATANIC SUBTERFUGE

O people of wisdom! Keep people informed of the machinations of Satan. The aberrations of peoples' morals have already given some satisfaction to Satan. Don't endorse his accursed wishes any further. *Nahi an il Munkar* (abstinence from the taboo) is obligatory on every believer. At least express abhorrence of the satanic actions. There is no precondition attached to doing this. It is the bounden duty of all of us to save ourselves from such a situation!

Those who witness some foul act of their friends and, instead of advising them to abstain from such acts, encourage and abet them in doing more such acts, then they too will be deemed partners in the commitment of the undesirable acts. It is observed that a person abstains from going to cinema theatres and clubs to avoid getting looked down upon in the society. But he does have a desire to visit such places. This would mean that he is not afraid of Allah but fears his fellow men! Despite his abstinence from going to places of ill repute, he is committing a sin because of his evil desires.

THINNER THAN THE HAIR AND SHARPER THAN A SWORD

Beware of becoming the companions of Satan that he penetrates into your person. We might be carrying a hallucination that we are performing good deeds and, in actual fact, our actions are all at the instigation of Satan. This situation is so delicate that it is thinner than the hair and sharper than the sword.

According to Haji Noori some people die with the false pride that they are the friends of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and think that by making such claims they will earn a place in the Heaven. If they are true friends of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) then they would implicitly comply with all the commandments of the Faith. It is quite possible, if they are making empty claims of friendship with Hazrat Ali (a.s.), they are acting on the instigation of the accursed Satan!

Beware O hapless Muslims! Your faith is in danger! If Satan puts you in doubts at the time of your death, what would happen to you? In your own false pride you claim to be Hazrat Ali (a.s.)'s friend!

Where are you heading to? In whose obedience you are indulging? If that is Satan, then he is your friend and guide. The friendship of Ali (a.s.) too might be there in your heart. But let it not be dominated by other evil influences! Confess whether you value your worldly desires more than the love of Hazrat Ali (a.s.)! If your concern is fulfillment of worldly desires, are you not concerned for the Hereafter?

THE HEREAFTER DEPENDS ON THE WORLDLY DESIRES

The hearts have been conquered by satans. Who is worried about the Hereafter. When people go to the *Majlis of Hazrat Abul Fazlil Abbas,* they seek his intercession for the fulfillment of their worldly desires. If their wishes were fulfilled without the intercession, they might not have gone to the *majlis!*

Has it ever happened that you have sought intercession that your end comes with love of Ali (a.s.) in your hearts and you don't become the victims of Satan at the time of death!

A DIFFERENCE OF THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS

It has been narrated in the traditions that some of the friends of Hazrat (a.s.) will reach him after three hundred thousand years of retribution.

This is true because your heart is for Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in a thousand ways! But before reaching the presence of the Imam (a.s.) the curtains have to be raised. First, the traces of love for others have to be removed before one could get access to Ali (a.s.) " O Ameer al Momineen! You must yourself show kindness to your friends!"

We should hope that we die with the love for Ali (a.s.) in the depths of our hearts and Allah's Beneficence is on us!

THE FIRST ASPECT

TAQWA OR PIETY

THE EIGHTH TALK

TAQWA THE FIRST ASPECT OF ISTA-AAZA

The summary of our discussion is that *taqwa* or piety is the first, and foremost, aspect of Ista-aaza. Therefore, this foremost aspect or pillar must be very strong and formidable so that the super-structure built on it too is strong.

The word *taqwa* is derived from the word *waqayat* which means guarding and protecting. In the juridical sense, abstention from acting against *awamir wa nawahi* (commandments and prohibitions) is termed *taqwa.*

It is necessary that *taqwa* should entrench itself to such a degree that the very thought of committing sins becomes abhorrent to us. For example, even if all the friends join together to encourage a man of piety to gossip or backbite

against another person, he must desist from doing it. This is termed *malikat e taqwa* wherein a tendency develops in a person that he is able to resist the onslaught of Satan.

ABSTINENCE FROM MAKROOHAAT OR UNBECOMING

To reach the elevated state of piety one has necessarily to abstain from unbecoming habits and things. Then abstention from *haram* or taboo things becomes easier for us. By practicing this abstinence, piety will get stronger.

As far as possible we should not miss the optional prayers (*mustahebaat).* One who is regular at offering these optional prayers, will never think of foregoing the mandatory prayers.

THORNY JUNGLE AND THE BAREFOOT TRAVELLER

Some learned scholar has given a very interesting definition of *taqwa* and has explained it with an interesting example too.

When you walk barefooted through a thorny jungle, how will you traverse the way? Will you keep your eyes up and walk casually or keep every step with due care and observation to prevent the thorns hurting your bare feet?

Taqwa too means that on the path of life Satan has spread thorns and the man of piety has to save himself from getting hurt by them and keep moving forward all the time.

THE BAIT AND INTRIGUE OF SATAN

The exercise of this care is so necessary that Imam Zain al Abedeen has included the following supplication in the *Sahifa e Kamila:*

" O Allah! I beseech for your protection against the bait and intrigue of Iblees!"

You must have noticed that the hunter keeps his net hidden or camouflaged that the animal notices only the bait and not the net. In the urge for eating the bait, the animal gets caught in the net.

The accursed Iblees uses several baits. He has several camouflaged ditches of sin and perfidy to entangle his prey.

PIETY HAS THE FACULTY OF SEEKING THROUGH SATAN'S BAITS

The purpose of *taqwa* is to keep the eyes open and not let them get enamored of the attractive things in the environment. They can thus see through the baits of Satan.

People should pray to Allah to give them vision to see through the schemes of Satan and don't blindly fall prey to his schemes.

SOME NECESSARY EXAMPLES

THE BAZAAR IS SATAN'S BAIT

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah that the bazaar is the play ground of Satan:

" The worst part of the earth is the bazaar. This is the play ground of Satan where he hoists his standard in the mornings and places his chair, and spreads his chess-board. He cheats in the weighing and measuring of things. He sells away adulterated things."—Safinat al Bihar, Vol1, Page 8

This is the reason that the Infallible Imams have exhorted people not to linger for long in the bazaars. They say that bazaar is a place only for negotiations and making deals. It is not proper for people with learning to associate themselves with the bazaar.

Being the first to enter a bazaar and emerging from it the last of all is an undesirable act because in this period Satan will be the companion of the

person. It has been narrated in the traditions that Hazrat Ameer al Momineen (a.s) found Abdur Rehman Ibn e Muljim, the accursed, gallivanting in the bazar on 18th Ramadan. The Imam (a.s.) inquired, " What are you doing here?" He said, " I am going round the bazaar!" The Imam (a.s.) said, " The bazaar is the place for Satan." Aimlessly loitering in the bazaar motivates a person to indulge in undesirable activities. Even today loafing in the bazaar is not considered a good activity. If you wish to be a man of piety you have to tread carefully in the bazaar, as does a person on a road full of thorns.

ISTA-AAZA BEFORE ENTERING THE BAZAAR

When you enter the bazaar you must seek Allah's protection in the following manner:

"O Allah! Protect me that I don't get involved in sin by being unfair in my dealings, by telling lies, by insulting others. Save me from cheating and deceit. Prevent me from doing wrong propaganda and save me from the thoughts of greed and avarice. All these are satanic acts."

I don't suggest that one should never go to the bazaar and not transact there. My only appeal is that when one goes to the bazaar, he should remember Allah and use his better sense and care.

One person quotes from Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.). He says, " I asked the Imam (a.s.) that I have business transactions with a woman and I have to, perforce, negotiate with he face to face. Is my looking at her face legitimate or not?" The Imam replied, " *Attiq Allah!* Kepp Allah's fear in your heart and exercise care!"

Imagine, There could be the possible risk of looking repeatedly at the face of the strange woman might give rise to sinful thoughts in the mind of the person and augur ill luck for him!

SATAN'S TRAP IN THE BAZAAR

Even while walking on the street one has to be careful. If you think that on one street there is a trap installed by Satan, take another and safer street, even if that is more tortuous and can take more time to traverse. For example, if there is a cinema theatre or a place of indecent activities on your way, or there are indecent posters of women on display, it is better to take a diversion and used

some other street. You might say that such things on the way never tempt you to indulge in sin. But care is always advisable.

FELLOW-TRAVELLERS—A DANGEROUS TRAP

Sometimes the person (s) travelling with one might prove satanic traps. He might be foul mouthed, backbiter or a person of poor intellect. Such a companion should be avoided.

Two companions, particularly when they are women, whose will is generally weak, have tendency to be ensnared by Satan. When they start gossiping, other's matters come up for discussion. As time passes, they shift from innocuous talk to backbiting, insinuations, scandals, mockery and many such taboo things.

The trap of Iblees is such that in the beginning people talk about eac other's health, exchange humor and narrate interesting anecdotes. But then Satan misguides them to fall into his trap and start discussing taboo things.

You must have witnessed that when two persons get together, their talk initially had no element of fault. But in about an hour's time there will be an element of lies in their conversation that might push them into the morass of Hell. Emerging out of the morass will be a Herculean task. As a follow up to the conversation, even if they go to a mosque, you should not think that they are God fearing persons because Satan continues to be with them.

RECOGNISE YOURSELF

Iblees has so many traps that if a person is not pious and careful, he will get entrapped in such a way that he will not rest till the person is consigned to the Hell.

O people with wisdom! Exercise care and keep your tongur in absolute control. What right you have to find fault with others. Every individual is answerable for his own actions. The burden of one person will not be put on the back of another. *La tazar wazerat wa zar uqra!*

Remember! Talking against each other, backbiting and carrying of tales are all the traps of Satan. When you are in company of others, beware of this trap.

WOMAN IS THE MOST FORMIDABLE TRAP

Women are the most formidable traps of Satan. The only exceptions are those women who have confronted and fought with Satan all their lives.

It takes some time for Satan to snare men out of the right path. But women is more vulnerable and aid and abet the involvement of men too. Have you not heard that Satan was not able to tempt Adam (a.s.) with all his stratagems. Then he turned his attention towards Hazrat Hawwa (a.s.) and succeeded in making both of them to do the forbidden.

It is narrated that Satan said to Hazrat Yahya (a.s.)," Whenever I fail in trapping anyone, I use women to fulfill my plans!"

Yes! With the help of women Satan progresses towards his objective and thus involves the men in his schemes.

"*wa laqad sadaq alaihim Iblees anha"*

Certainly Iblees has proved his thinking right about them."

COMPANY OF WOMEN IS THE PREFACE TO SINNING

This is the reason that there are authentic traditions of the *Ahl al Bayt* that excessive company of women makes men hard of heart.

This doesn’t mean that men should totally shun the company of women. But care must be exercised because nearness to women is one of the traps that are used by Satan.You must have observed that a single word from a woman can drastically change the thinking of a man! Can render the person emotional and turn him inadvertently towards many sinful acts.

It is a matter of concern that a strange (*Na Mahram)* woman in privacy with a man then the trap of Satan becomes strong and very dangerous.

Shaking hands with a strange woman is *Haram.* Think of the impious animals that how deeply they are entrapped by Satan that they are totally unaware that the bodily touch of a woman is one of the uncanny traps of Satan.

THE TALE OF BARSEESA

One imposter, whose name was Barseesa, always used to make the pretense of prayer and lived in seclusion. People used to say that his prayers would help in the fulfillment of their wishes.

The daughter of the king of the time once fell seriously ill. All treatments proved futile. In the end it was thought that the only way for curing her of the illness was the prayer of Barseesa. But the hermit refused to come out of his seclusion to the city or the palace of the king. In the end they reluctantly took the sick princess to his hermitage. They left her alone with the hermit.

If this unfortunate hermit was a true man of piety he would have objected to the leaving of the young princess alone with him. But he fell in the trap of Satan. He looked at the girl and was attracted by her beauty. He had not experienced such a situation throughout his life. He could not control his baser instinct and raped the girl.

But Satan didn’t stop at this. He put doubts in the heart of Barseesa that when people learn of his foul act they would lynch him. To save himself from death he thought of killing the girl and burying her. He also thought that if inquiries are made about the girl, he would say that he didn’t know where she had gone.

With these doubts and fears in his mind, Barseesa killed the princess while she was asleep. Then he dug up a trench and buried her.

It is narrated that Satan came in human form to the persons who were searching for the princess and said, " I know where the girl is!"he then guided them to the place where the grave was. The angry team demolished Barseesa’s hermitage and dragged him to the court of the king. People started spitting on his face. The king ordered him to be hanged.

In the olden days the hanging of criminals was not such an easy and fast process as it is now. It was a prolonged and torturous procedure. When Barseesa was about to die Satan came to him and said, " Even now if you prostrate to me, I shall save you!" To save himself from death, Barseesa agreed to prostrate to Satan. In his last breaths Satan tempted Barseesa to commit a major sin and earn a place for himself in the fiery Hell.

THE NINTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taaefum minal Shaitane tazakkaru fa izahum mubseroon-7.201, Al Araf

ISTA-AAZA IS EFFECTIVE ONLY WITH PIETY

The summary of the previous evening's talk is that the prime and the first aspect of *Ista-aaza* is *Taqwa* or piety. If a person is pious, then seeking Allah's protection from Satan by saying *aaoozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem* is effective. Otherwise reiterating these words a thousand times over will not bring any results.

Today I shall tell you about another meaning derived from the verse that I have mentioned above and also at a few places in my previous talks.

A HEART WITHOUT PIETY IS THE ABODE OF SATAN

A heart that has not experienced piety, believe me, is the abode of Satan. Satan doesn't relinquish such a heart easily.

A heart without piety is the heart that doesn't remember Allah. It is in fact crowded with worldly desires like greed, selfishness and Satanic fears. Such hearts are the repositories of wishes for the worldly glitter and show. These hearts are also the shelter for Satan and the sources of his evil designs. Unless the heart cures itself of these satanic instincts and withdraws from supporting and advancing Satan's foul schemes, it is impossible that the environment for *Ista-aaza* takes shape in it.

SUMPTUOUS FOOD & HUNGRY DOG

You might have experienced that a hungry dog will not leave your side if you are having with you some tasty food. However much you try to chase away the dog, it will return to you. Even if you pick up a stick to chase it away, it will stubbornly stay on. If you don't have any food with you, and a dog chances to come near you, then it will run away if you chase but once. The reason for this lack of interest is that the dogs have a very strong sense of smell and they would know where there is a bone for them!

A SICK HEART IS THE EATING PLACE FOR SATAN

Your heart is under the observation of Satan. If he feels that there is food for him in your heart that it has craving for worldly riches and pomp, then certainly it is the ideal place for him to entrench himself in. If he notices that your heart is having so much avarice that even after acquiring a lot it has craving for more and is envious of others, then he is very pleased to dwell therein. You may say *aa oozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem* a hundred thousand times, Satan will tenaciously stay on! *Innal Shaitan lakum adu- annahu adu um mubeen—Satan is your open enemy!* The only remedy is that you should dispel from your heart

all the thoughts of things that attract him. Then with one utterance of the words *aa oozu billah* Satan will run away.

THE MAJORITY IS ENTRAPPED

It is narrated that once Satan came to the presence of Hazrat Yahya (a.s.). Prophet Yahya (a.s.) asked him about his treatment of Adam (a.s)'s progeny. He replied that men are divided into three groups.

The first group consists of the revered persons who are always out of his reach. These are the Prophets (a.s.) and the Infallible.

Then Satan said that the second group consists of the people over whom he can have his sway. But with penitence they nullify his maneuvers.

The third group of people is of those in whose hearts he, Satan, lives. These form the vast majority of people.

O believers! Do such acts that Satan is unable to find an entry into your hearts! Otherwise, mere utterance of the words of *Ista-aaza* will not be of any use.

THE THIEF ON THE LOOK OUT

FOR BREAKING INTO THE HOUSE

To prevent Satan from entrenching into your heart you will have to adopt piety. Shun all things that are not liked by Allah. Shun avarice, amoral acts, bad habits and all such evil traits that take you towards illegitimate acts and illegitimate food. The heart will then be pure and clean.

Once the heart is cleansed of these things, then piety will find it's way into it. It will now have the fear of Allah and the fear of the Day of Reckoning. Now Satan will be rendered absolutely helpless. He does have the extreme desire to enter such hearts and waits for the slightest chance that the person commits a mistake and opens the way for him.

Satan is like a thief who does reconnaissance of the fort to find a foothold or the slightest of openings to break in. But when he notices that the keeper of the fort is alert he escapes from the ramparts disappointed.

IBLEES AROUND THE HEART

Innal lazeena attaqau--- This is said about those whose hearts are free of the thoughts of sin. When the heart is pure and clean, then automatically all other organs get into sound repair. Therefore, the tongue, the eyes, the ears and the limbs do not get associated with any wrong act.

Iza massahum taaef--- Taaef is a person who does *tawaaf* or circumambulates. Here it is meant Satan going round the heart in search of a hole to break in.

Min al Shaitan--- it is the mention of the retainers of Satan who go round the heart in search of an opening to barge in. But

Tazkkaru--- The owner of the heart, a *momin,* is busy in Remembrance of Allah and says, " *Ya Allah- Astghfar Allah- Aaoozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem— O Allah! Protect me from the harm that Satan can cause me!"*

Hence,

Fa izahum mubseroon--- Their eyes instantaneously illuminate with the light of vision and they get warned of the thief in their environs.

Here I wish to point at the words *Taaef min al Shaitan* which connote that the one who takes rounds of the heart of a *momin* to find an entry is from the group of Satan.

Remember! If there is piety (*Taqwa)* for Allah in the heart, then it will be pure and clean. The bright light of piety will put the thief to shame and he escapes

from there. Pity the heart that is devoid of piety and full of worldly desires. Such a person will fall into the clutches of Satan and meet a sad end.

WHY THE SUICIDE?

One avaricious trader sold his goods worth thirty thousand for one hundred thousand. Later on he learned that the first buyer sold the merchandise for three hundred thousand within three days. He was distraught with remorse that the opportunity of making a huge profit was missed by him. He was jealous and envious of the traders who made the big gain. He started crying and was restless during the day and in the nights. He was so upset that at last he consumed lime mixed with sulfur and committed suicide. The sole reason for the tragedy is that the person was wedded only to worldly gains and was devoid of Allah's fear.

WHY ISTA-AAZA IS NOT EFFECTIVE?

We should all awake from the slumber of carelessness because the root cause of all sins is the love for the world.

Keep your heart free of all pollutants. Because, if only the use of the tongue sufficed, then saying *aaoozu billahi min al Shaitan ir rajeem* prior to every mandatory prayer would do! This goes to prove that only saying the *Ista-aaza* from the tongue is not sufficient.

What is the reason that when people stand for prayer, their attention hovers around everywhere and is not focussed on the prayer! This despite reiteration of Allah's name by the tongue time and again. It proves the point that the mind and heart of the person should be as much present as the person uses his tongue during the prayer.

A person once lost his wallet. He searched for it the whole day. Around the time of *Maghrib* prayer in the evening he remembered the place where he had left the wallet. Immediately after saying the salutations at the end of the prayer he called his servant to look for the wallet in a particular place .The servant said, " Sir! Were you offering your prayer or searching for your wallet?"

Remember! There are four things that prevent the light entering the heart:

As long as we don't guard against these four things, darkness will prevail on our hearts. The very first thing that must be avoided is impurity of the body. The second important thing is that we should refrain from disobedience to Allah. The third is to guard against the fears and doubts created by Satan. The last, but not the least, is abstaining from bad manners that can turn a man into animal. As long as a heart remains under the spell of bad manners, it will not understand the spirit of Ista-aaza.

Such persons remain under the influence of Satan and away from Allah even at the time of their death. It has been mentioned in the traditions that, *yahshar al naas ala niyatehim,* the final judgement of men will depend on their intentions during their lives. Allah gauges the intentions of the heart rather than the actions that result from these intentions.

REMEMBER THAT DEATH IS A REALITY

There are very few sermons of Ameer al Momineen (a.s.), in *Nahj al Balagha,* that don't throw light on this fact of life. He says, " Don't forget death because it is the best cure for the ailments of the heart and the spirit. One who always keeps this fact in view, it is like he has opened the door to guidance and reform."

After the day's toil when you reach home, then remember that perhaps your body might be carried to the grave next morning. When you leave home for work in the morning, then keep in mind the possibility that you might not return home alive.

If man inculcates this spirit in his nature, then slowly he will overcome the traits of jealousy, parsimony, avarice, hypocrisy, satanic fears and carelessness.

When I am not sure whether I will be alive till tomorrow or not, then what is the use of avarice and unnecessarily displeasing others with my actions.

FLIES BUZZ AROUND THE HONEY

Another example is sited for you. You must have noticed the way ants and other insects hover around sweet things. However much you try to chase them away, they return to pester you. The only way to get rid of them is to remove the things that attract them.

O Momin! Clean your heart of all impurities that Satan runs away with one *Ista-aaza* from you.

Hazrat Syed e Sajjad (a.s.) used to recite *Dua e Hazeen* after the nightly prayer (*Namaz e Shab*). He supplicates to Allah thus, " O Allah help me! Satan is attacking my heart!" When a *momin* has nothing in his heart that interests Satan, and he remembers Allah, then only one *Ista-aaza* would suffice to chase the accursed enemy away.

SATAN A STUMBLING BLOCK

IN THE WAY OF PENITENCE

It is narrated that when the following verse was revealed:

Wal lazeena iza fa alu faheshat au zalamu anfusahu zakaru wa allaha fasthagfir wal zunubehim ....

Allah forgives those who repent after committing sins.

Satan cried out and his retainer assembled around him and asked, " What has happened? Why are you shouting?" The accursed one said, " Why shouldn't I shout and cry! We work so hard to make a man commit sins. And he expresses penitence that renders our efforts null and void!"

Every individual from his retainers gave his own advice on the matter. But Satan was not satisfied with any of those. Then someone said, " The only way will be to prevent man from reaching the threshold of the door of penitence!" Satan said, " Your suggestion is right! If there is any way for us, this is the way!"

THE PRACTICE OF HAZRAT SYED E SAJJAD (A.S)

The Imam (a.s.) used to supplicate to Allah thus, " O Allah! Keep me in your shelter from this enemy who is after my life! O Helper of all the helpless! I am forlorn and support-less! Come to my rescue. From one side this dog is attacking me and on the other is the world tempting me with all its glitter and

attractions! There is pressure of avarice and greed on my heart! I seek your help against all these!"

THE SUPPLICATION OF GHAREEQ

DURING THE ABSENCE OF THE IMAM (A.S.)

Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) , while predicting the period of the absence of the Last Imam (a.s), says, " During that troublesome period there will be so much of sedition that the angels would be astonished at the very few deaths of men of piety!" The narrator asked the Imam (a.s.)," What should the people do in that difficult time?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, " They should recite the *Dua e Ghareeq.* This consists in saying '*Ya Allaho ya Rahmano ya Raheem ya Muqallabul Quloob sabbit qalbi ala deenak--- O Rehman, O Raheem, O one who Guides the hearts! Keep my heart steadfast on Your Faith!"*

Man should think that he is really helpless in times when Satan's retainers are roaming free. No heart is safe from their onslaught. O Allah! Guard our hearts from the effects of these Shayateen!

THE TENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taef min al shaitan tazakkar wa afaza hum mubseroon- Al-Araf 201

It is proved from the previous talk that the most important aspect of *Ista-aaza* is *Taqwa* or piety. If a person is devoid of antagonism of Satan and doesn't submit himself to Rehman, then he is in the trap of Satan and his *Ista-aaza* is of no use.

WHY ISTA-AAZA

Here one might ask when there is *Taqwa* in a person, then what is the need for *Ista-aaza.* When a person doesn't commit any sins, and is not a transgressor, then there may not be the need for seeking Allah's Protection against the onslaught of Satan.

The reply to this question is that the question itself is topsy- turvy. The fact is that *Ista-aaza* is only for the people of *Taqwa.* One who observes *Taqwa* will always submit to Allah for His protection lest the evil Satan catch him unawares and achieve control over his heart. Once Satan penetrates his heart, all his actions will be at the instance of Satan.

A person whose heart is free of the influence of Satan and spends his time in prayer and supplication to Allah, should necessarily seek Allah's protection against the fears and temptations of Satan, and his ilk, because they are always on the lookout for the slightest opportunity to subdue him. A *momin* has to exercise utmost care in this matter.

GOOD DEEDS OR GUIDANCE FOR EVIL

Satan strives hard to find a place in the heart of a *momin.* It is narrated that even if a *momin* escapes unscathed from the trap of Satan because of his good deeds ninety nine times, he might become the victim on the hundredth attempt! It is

quite possible that the instigation for the good deeds ninety nine times too was by Satan only to make the person complacent that he fell into the trap on the hundredth attempt! Thus Satan derives satisfaction from destroying in one stroke the effects of the good actions of the person spread over long period. The dividing line between the good and the evil is very narrow and one must take great care not to falter towards evil. Therefore the Imams (a.s) supplicate to Allah thus, " O sustainer give me vision in the matter of Faith! That during performance of good deeds Satan doesn't involve me in fears and misapprehensions and thus push me into the morass of evil."

EVIL THROUGH GOOD

There is a social function arranged by someone's kin. Satan persuades him to attend it as a matter of (*sila e rahem)* giving attention to the welfare of his relations. When the person reaches the venue, he finds that the party was in full swing with dance and song and service of intoxicants. He doesn't like the atmosphere. His heart prompts him to get away from that participating in such gatherings is Haram. But Satan tells him' If you leave the party while it is in progress, it will amount to breaking the party. This step will be *Qata e Rahem* or causing hurt to your relatives."

Thus Satan misguides people from the path of virtue towards vice.

TO MAKE ONE MISS THE MANDATORIES PROMPTING PEOPLE TO BUSY IN OPTIONAL RITES

Sometimes Satan encourages people to give more attention to optional matters to make them miss the mandatory duties. For example, he prompts a person to proceed on a pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Imam Reza (a.s.). he convinces him that performing this optional pilgrimage will bring him lots of reward in

the Hereafter. The person neglects his mandatory duty of providing for his old parents and family and proceeds on the pilgrimage.

Satan thus makes people overlook mandatory duties in the performance of the optional.

LOSING INTEREST IN PRAYERS

Sometimes Satan makes a person engrossed in an optional act to such an extent that he loses interest and inclination to perform the mandatory prayers. For example he puts in the mind of a person to proceed for the Ziarats to Karbala that his sins would be pardoned and his prosperity would increase. Satan also convinces him somehow that if he went illegally without proper papers and permissions, his rewards would be redoubled! The person thus commences his journey. To his misfortune he gets caught for making an illegal entry and is put in jail. Then he curses himself why his legs were not fractured to prevent him from going there. Imagine, how Satan tempted the person to go in a hurry for performance of an optional act and as a result made him lose interest in the pilgrimage of great felicity!

O ALLAH! GIVE US VISION IN THE MATTERS OF FAITH

The people of piety cannot do without recourse to *Ista-aaza.* They are always fearful of the interference of Satan because he keeps trying to divert them from worship of Allah. May Allah give the vision to people that they are able to understand if the acts they are doing are really good or are evil acts that Satan has tempted them to perform. It is the common observation that an act appears good and harmless but in reality it turns out to be otherwise.

To illustrate the point a tradition is mentioned here.

SATAN PRAYING SUSPENDED IN THE SKY

It is mentioned in *Bihar al Anwar* from *Usool e Kaafi* that Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) narrated about a person, in the olden times, who kept himself busy in prayer and supplication to Allah. He was so deeply engrossed in prayer that Satan , despite all the efforts, was unable to disrupt this activity. Upset at his failure, Satan called a meeting of his retainers to devise ways and means of achieving his desire. He said:

"I have not succeeded tempting the pious person despite all my efforts. Can you think of a stratagem to unnerve him!"

One of his disciples said, " By creating evil desires in his mind I shall motivate him to commit adultery."

Satan replied, " There is no use. The desire for women has been extinguished from his heart."

Another disciple said, " I shall tempt him with delicacies and drinks that he gets destroyed consuming *haram* food and alcohol."

Satan said, " No use! After years of penance he has lost palate for good food."

A third retainer said, " Perhaps he can be tricked through the way of prayer which is his favorite activity!"

Satan said, " Yes. We might succeed this way."

Anyway, the result of this confabulation was that Satan himself took the responsibility to do the job. He adopted the garb of a human being, suspended himself in the atmosphere sitting on a prayer mat and pretended to be busy in prayer.

When the pious person saw this, he went to inquire of Satan about the prayer that he performed to get the faculty of suspending himself in the atmosphere. But Satan appeared so intently engrossed in prayer that even after repeated calls he did not give any attention to the pious person. Fed up of waiting, the person asked Satan to respond to him under an oath. Satan took a respite from his pretended prayer.

The pious person asked, " What great task you have performed that you are at such an elevated place?"

He replied, " I have achieved this status through commitment of a sin. After committing the sin I have repented and done penance. Even now I continue to be penitent. With my worship I am growing stronger by day. If you desire to achieve the same status you too must commit adultery and then busy yourself in penitence."

The pious man said, " Neither do I know the way of doing adultery nor have I money for the purpose."

Satan gave him two Dirhams and explained the way to the house of a woman of ill repute.

The pious person entered the town and inquired from the people about the exact location of the woman's house. People thought that he was intending to visit her to sermon the woman to give up her foul ways. The man went to the woman and gave her the money and demanded to do adultery with her. At this point Allah's help came to his rescue that the woman thought of preventing him from committing the sinful act. The woman saw piety written large on the face of the person and that he was not habituated of going to such houses of ill repute.

She asked him, " How have you come here?"

The man replied, " This is not your concern. I have given you the money and you must comply."

The woman said, " As long as I don't know the real reason of your coming here, I shall not submit to you."

Alas, the pious man yielded and told the entire story to her.

The woman said, " I might be losing custom by dissuading you from your resolve, but I am sure it was only Satan who has sent you here."

The man said, " You are wrong because he has assured me that I shall be able to get the same status as enjoyed by him if I commit the sin of adultery."

The woman said, " Don't be foolish! How are you sure that after committing adultery you will ever get a chance to be penitent and your penitence will get accepted? Believe me! You are under the spell of Satan's temptation."

When the pious person was persistent, the woman said, " I am ready to yield to you. But go back to the place once and see if the person is still busy in prayer suspended in the atmosphere. If you find him there, then you can come back to me. But if he is not there, then you must believe that it was Satan who wants to deter you from the path of piety."

When the pious person reached the place, he found no trace of Satan there. Then it dawned on him that the woman had saved him from falling into the abyss of sin. He offered a sincere prayer for the fallen woman.

It has been said in the tradition that when the woman died, a revelation came to the Prophet (a.s.) of the time that he should join her funeral procession. The Prophet (a.s.) protested to Allah that she was a fallen woman. The reply was, " Yes! But she was responsible for sending back to Us a pious person who was running away from piety under the deceit of Satan!"

Sermons and moralizing are very valuable. Every effort must be made to dissuade persons from committing sins. Motivate them to be penitent. Allah will reward them as well as those who make effort to reform such persons.

It is a matter of great surprise that when we look at the temptations of Satan and our moral weaknesses, we fail to understand what will be our end! Will we be able to reach Him? We only need Allah’s Mercy and Munificence for our deliverance.

Iza rayata maulaya zunubi fazeto wa iza rayata karamak tam at

O Allah! I get scared looking at my sins but when I see You Munificence I become hopeful.

THE ELEVENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza samma taaef min ash shaitane tazkaru iz hum mubseroon- Al A-raf 201

SATAN THE INITIATOR OF ACTIONS

The topic of discussion is *Ista-aaza. Ista-aaza* is the way of the pious. Those who are not pious have Satan dwelling within them. All their thoughts and actions are at the instance of Satan. Then what is the need for their seeking Allah's protection against the influences of Satan. Escape from Satan wil naturally be sought by those who are men of piety and whenever Satan creeps near their hearts, they busy themselves in the *Zikr* or Remembrance of Allah. When Satan realizes this he escapes from them.

The men of piety are always wary that they don't commit taboo actions and don't miss the legitimate and obligatory practices. Whenever any satanic entity comes near their hearts, intuition warns them and, they busy themselves in *Ista-aaza.* When Satan notices this, he slinks away.

When the persons of piety are busy remembering Allah, their vision and knowledge manifests to them the trap Satan has set for them.

My intention is to dwell in today's talk on the word '*mubseroon'* in the verse under reference. The men of piety are endowed '*baseerat'* or *vision* by Allah to perceive the trap laid by Satan with their own eyes. When Satan realizes that his game was over, he flies away. It is very felicitous that a *momin* has the vision of the fears and doubts that Satan can create. These fears and doubts could be in the matters of faith or about morals etc.

SATAN DOESN'T EVEN SPARE THE PROPHETS

Certain fears and doubts created by Satan pertain to matters of belief and in this aspect he doesn't refrain from influencing even the hearts of the prophets.

It is narrated that Satan came to Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) when he was standing on the peak of a hill. He addressed The Prophet (a.s.) saying," O Spirit of Allah! If you fall from this peak, can Allah save your life!" He replied," I can tell you with my vision and Understanding that Allah would most certainly save me." Satan added, " If you are so certain, dive down from here that He saves you!"

Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) understood that Satan was up to his tricks. Therefore he said, " O accursed one! Do you intend to put Allah to test! My Faith is strong. Allah is Omnipotent and has control over every thing. You have come here with the purpose of testing whether saving me is possible or not." Hazrat also added, "

My Creator has commanded me not to do such things. Purposely falling from the top of the hill will be an attempt at suicide that is *haram.* If one falls from the hill accidentally, and Allah wishes him to live on, then He will save him!"

HAZRAT EESA CONVERSES WITH SATAN

It is narrated that once Satan came to Hazrat Eesa (a.s) and said, " O Spirit of Allah! You are yourself the Omnipotent and Omniscient God." Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) reprimanded him for this talk and said, " I am Allah's creation and slave on whose prayer He brings back the dead to life!"

When Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) tried toremoved doubts of Satan in this manner, he ran away from there crying.

Satan puts such doubts and fears in the minds of the pious persons. But they understand his tricks with the light of piety that they are only satanic doubts. For example; sometimes he puts a doubt in the heart of a *momin* that a particular person, despite being young and strong, has resorted to begging. Why has he turned a beggar? Satan's purpose of creating such doubts is to create apprehensions in the minds of believers about the will of Allah.But if the person is a *momin* aware of Allah's Greatness he will say, " *Asthagfar Allah!* How can I dare to question the Will of Allah? My Faith is that His acts are all replete with wisdom beyond our comprehension."

SATAN ATTEMPTS TO CREATE FEARS IN THE MIND OF

HAZRAT IBRAHIM (A.S)

Every pious person strives to perform good deeds and Satan tries his best to dissuade him from doing so. If a person performs a good deed, Satan tries to neutralize its good effects through his tricks. For example; he will encourage the person to express pride after doing some good turn. Satan is thus the sworn enemy of all good deeds.

Here the example of one of the elite prophets of Allah will be appropriate.

You must have heard of Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s) that when he was taking his beloved son Ismail (a.s.) to *mina* to sacrifice him under the Commandment of

Allah, Satan was flabbergasted. He knew that if Ibrahim (a.s.) was able to fulfill this task, he will get a very elevated place in the consideration of Allah. He thought of stratagems to prevent Ibrahim (a.s.) from achieving this.

The first thing he did was to go to hazrat Hajera and create doubts and fear in her mind. He told her, " I have seen an aged person guiding a handsome youth by hand. Who is he!" Hazrat Hajera said, " That is my spouse Ibrahim (a.s)." Satan asked, " Are you aware of his intention as to why he is taking your son along with him? His intention is to cut the head of his son Ismail (a.s.)" Hazrat Hajera replied, " Ibrahim (a.s.) has not harmed even his sworn enemies. How is it possible that he will sever the head of his own son." Satan said, " He is thinking that Allah has commanded him to do so!" The great lady immediately understood that the person talking to her was Satan and was trying to create doubts in her mind. She said, " O accursed creature! Run away! If what he is doing is under Allah's Command then we abide by it."

IBLEES TESTS THE FAITH

The purpose of the creation of Satan is to judge on the Day of Reckoning as to who was steadfast in keeping to the right path and who veered away from it under his evil influence. Therefore Allah says in the Holy Book:

Wa ma kana alaihim min sultane alla naalam man yauman bil aakhirat man huwa minha fi shak

Satan has no control over menbut for Us to know who keeps total faith on the Hereafter and who has doubts about it.

Although Hazrat Hajera is a woman but the strength of her faith is such intensity that she agreed to sacrifice her only son in the Way of Allah without a whimper of doubt or fear.

SATAN ATTEMPTS CREATING DOUBTS

IN THE MIND OF IBRAHIM (A.S.)

Now Satan went to Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s) and said, " What are you trying to do?" He replied, " I shall sacrifice my son, Ismail (a.s.) Satan said, " What crime has he committed?" Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) said, " This I am doing on Allah's Command!" Satan said, " If you kill your own son for the good will of Allah, it

will be a bad example for your followers to emulate in the future!" Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) again reiterated that what he was doing was under the command of Allah. Satan said, " Is it not possible that what you are doing is not Allah’s Command." At this moment Hzrat Ibrahim hit Satan with a stone. This is why there is the practice of the Hajis throwing stones at *rumi Jamarat* during Haj as an emulation of Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s)’s action.

Now the accursed Satan turned his attention towards Hazrat Ismail (a.s.) who was walking behind his revered father. He said, " Young lad! Do you know where you father is taking you?" Ismail (a.s.) said, " I don’t know!" Satan added" Your father intends to kill you." Ismail (a.s.) asked, How could he do such a thing?" Satan said, " he thinks that Allah has commanded him to do it!" Hazrat Ismail (a.s.) siad, " If he is acting on Allah’s orders, then my life is a small sacrifice for that purpose!" But, despite this rebuff Satan persisted in trying to create doubts in the mind of the young Ismail (a.s). Then Hazrat Ismail (a.s.) protested to his father, " O father! See who is this person who is pestering me?" Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) said, " This is Satan the accursed!’ Then Hazrat Ismail (a.s.) too hurled stones at him.

HAVE WE TOO SPURNED SATAN AT ANY TIME

Now I address the revered Hajis in this gathering! In emulation of Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s) you have done the rite of *Rumi Jamarat* during the Haj. *Jamarat* is not only a rite to be performed during the Haj, but throughout our lives we have to spurn and chase away Satan.

Where are those people who throw stones at Satan whenever he tries to create fears and doubts in their minds. They confront him with boldness and exercise control over themselves in times of anger and fury. When the wish to do taboo acts asserts itself, they shake it away with determination.

Sometimes it happens that a person wishes to do a good turn, then Satan brings forth a doubt that perhaps some other deed would be more appropriate. The person thus falls in doubt and is unable to act.

WHO IS GREATER?

It is narrated that now the father and son determined to comply with Allah’s Command; the father to sacrifce his son; and the son too to offer himself in sacrifice to Allah. The old father put the son’s head on the ground and put the sharp knife on his throat. At this moment the angels were surprised and asked each other, " Who is greater, the father or the son!" The father is great because he is willing to sacrifice his son who is the fruit of much prayer and supplication. The son is great because he is offering himself in sacrifice to Allah without a whimper of protest!

Both have come out successful in their test. But Allah’s Wish was that Ismail (a.s.) should live.

HAZRAT IBRAHIM (A.S.) LAMENTS

It is narrated that when Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s) felt that the knife is not cutting, and that the command for the sacrifice has been rescinded by Allah, he cried. Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) came to him and asked, " Why are you crying?" He said, " I think I am not fit enough that my sacrifice was not acceptable to Allah!" Jibraeel (a.s.) said, " You have successfully gone through all the stages of the sacrifice. Your heart even then cries that it has not reached its conclusion." Then Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s) told Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) about the hardships and the supreme sacrifice in store for Imam Hussain (a.s)!

THE TWELFTH TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taef minash shaitan tazakkar wa iza hum mubseroon—Al aaraf 201

THE REALITY OF ISTA-AAZA IS IN THIS VERSE

If this Holy Verse is considered with attention and thought is given to the facts, we will comprehend that the real spirit of *Ista-aaza* is reflected in it.

Those who have abandoned lascivious desires and turned their attention towards Allah, they have come out of Satan’s abode and entered Allah’s sanctuary. Those in whose hearts Satan doesn’t live, whenever he hovers around their heart for a chance to enslave them, they busy themselves in the Remembrance of Allah. Thus their hearts are illumined, they become aware of Satan’s trickery and with the power of *Ista-aaza* chase him away.

THE SUPPLICATION OF IMAM SAJJAD (A.S.)

Hazrat Zain al Abedeen (a.s.) submits to Allah in *Sahifa e Sajjadia:*

"O Allah! When we have two desires and only one of them is to Your liking and the other might win your displeasure. Then turn our hearts towards the desire that is to Your liking that pleases You. Deny us (even the thought of) the desire that displeases You."

When Allah diverts people’s hearts in a certain direction, their thinking changes drastically. As far as we don’t make piety our way of life the hearts are controlled by Satan. In such a condition there will be no use of remembering Allah. When the heart is in the clutches of Satan, how could a person charter his own plan of action.

To illustrate this point I am relating another fable.

THE THIEF WHO PUT OFF THE LAMP

In the olden days when wax candles or fat wicks were used in homes for lighting purpose in homes, a thief entered a house in the night and started gathering things to take away. The owner of the house heard some noise and got up from his bed to light a lamp. When the thief realized that the master was up and trying to light a match, he slowly blew air at it to put it off. In the time that the person could light another match the thief put his fingers in his mouth and with his saliva moistened the wick of the lamp. Thus the house owner could not put on a light.

The foolish house owner couldn't realize there was someone there who was playing a trick on him. Hence, he gave up his efforts and retired to sleep again. The thief then did his work and departed.

A THIEF IN THE HEART

Believe me, even of the esoteric world the same is the condition. If Satan comes to live there, he doesn't allow the person to remember Allah. If a man has no piety, any amount of talking and remembrance of Allah will be of no use.

You might have noticed that during times of strife, despite remembrance of Allah, man doesn't realize that he is completely in the clutches of Satan. In such a situation, however much one sermonizes about Allah, the Prophet and the Imams (a.s) he will not see any reason. Satan will not allow the litigant to mend his attitude more because he is not a man of piety.

REFRAIN FROM FIGHTS EVEN IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) has said that a person who refrains from fights even if he is on the side of the truth, he would guarantee a high place in the Heaven for such a person. When a person is not on the right, but avoids fights, his place will be in the lowest stage in the Heaven.

Avoiding fights is possible only when a person is free of greed. Otherwise Satan will not ever allow him to live at peace with others. If a person dies in that condition, he will be termed as a man of Satan.

It is quite possible that there are persons who offer prayers, even in the mosque, under the control of Satan. Do these persons really come to the mosque in obedience to Allah? If they have come with Allah's call, then why are they so self-conscious. If they refrain from fights and adopt piety, then only they will have vision and get deliverance.

THE PATIENCE OF HAZRAT DUAL KIFL (A.S.)

Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) was among the Prophets of the past. His grave is near Hilla in Iraq and mention has been made of him in the Holy Quran. In *Bihar al Anwaar* there is a narration about the reason for his naming as Dual Kifl (a.s.). There was a prophet prior to him, whose name was Yasa (a.s.). His mention is also there in the Holy Quran. --- *Wal Yasa wa Dual Kifl.*

Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) was among the companions and disciples of hazrat Yasa (a.s.). In his last days Hazrat Yasa (a.s.) told to his companions, " Of you the person who promises to abide by the oath that I intend to take from you shall be my successor and vicegerent after me. The oath I want you to take is that you will not get angry under any circumstances and will not become a victim of Satan's instigation." Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) made a promise to the effect that he would never yield to the satanic instinct of anger. This was the reason that he was appointed to the august position of prophet and successfully faced the events that followed.

One should know that when a person is steadfast in his resolve to keep on the right path, Satan strives with equal tenacity to break his resolve. Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) was resolved to prevent the thought of anger ever crossing his mind. He stood like a mountain against all the efforts of Satan to provoke anger in him.

SATAN SEEKS HELP

One day Satan got together a meeting of his retainers. He said, " I am tired of the tenacity of Dual Kifl (a.s.). Whatever effort I make to break his resolve of

not becoming angry, I fail utterly." One Satan whose name was *Abyad* said, " I shall provoke Dual Kifl (a.s.) to get angry!" Satan appointed him to this task. One regular habit of Hazrat Dual Kifl(a.s.) was that he used to be praying and supplicating the whole night. During the day he kept himself busy attending to the tasks of people till *Duhr* prayer. He used to sleep at this time and awake at the time of *Asr.* Thereafter he used to busy himself in the service of people.

SATAN KNOCKS AT THE DOOR

One day, when Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s) was asleep, as usual, after *Duhr,* Satan knocked at the door and the janitor asked him, " What brings you here!" Satan said, " I have to make an appeal to him!" The Janitor said, " Come in the morning. Now he is sleeping."

Satan started shouting, crying and pleading aloud. He said that he lived at a distant place and he couldn't possibly come again the next day. Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s)'s sleep got disturbed in this hubbub. He asked him to go away and return with the respondent to his complaint next morning. Satan said that the other person would refuse to come. Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) gave him his ring and asked him to show it to the person and tell him that he was summoned to attend the hearing.

Satan went away but came back next day at the same time as he came on the previous day. Again he cried, shouted and disturbed Hazrat dual Kifl (a.s)'s sleep. Hazrat (a.s) woke up from his siesta, talked calmly to him and gave a letter in the name of the respondent.

Abyad went away and Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) was unable to sleep even on that day.

SATAN GETS FRUSTRATED

Imagine the condition of a person who has not slept for three consecutive nights and days. On the third day too Satan came to the door of hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) at the same time that he did on the previous two days. He disturbed his sleep and said that the respondent did not bother to give any cognizance to his letter. Then he started shouting ferociously to arouse anger in Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) The accursed one said, " If you personally come along with me now, perhaps my work can be attended to!" It is mentioned in the narration that the day was so hot that if a piece of meat was kept out, it would become a kebab instantly. Satan made so much noise that Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.) agreed to go with him. When he traversed the way coolly in that scorching condition, Satan knew that it was impossible to disturb Hazrat Dual Kifl (a.s.)'s resolve to keep his anger in control. Therefore he fled from there!

THERE WILL BE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF SUPPLICATION ON A HEART DEVOID OF PIETY

Sometimes remembrance of Allah has a negative effect on a heart devoid of piety.

Haven't you heard that while the accursed Ibn e Ziyad was handling the severed head of Imam Hussain (a.s), a drop of blood fell on his thigh and pierced to the other side of it. He put the head on the floor and touched the teeth of the Imam (a.s) in a blasphemous manner with a stick.

Zaid bin Arqam, a companion of the Prophet of Islam (a.s.), was present at that moment. He told Ibne Ziyad that he had witnessed the Prophet (a.s.) kiss these teeth affectionately that he was blaspheming against. The accursed person, instead of repenting his foul act told to Zaid bin Arqam, " It is a pity that you are an old man now! Otherwise I would have severed your head immediately!" Then he sent Zaid out of the court.

It is not only Ibn e Ziyad who perpetrated such foul behavior. Anyone whose heart is blind and deaf will have such tendencies. Any talk of remembrance of Allah will fall on the flat ears of such persons.

THE THIRTEENTH TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taef min ash shaitan tazkaru wa iza hum mubseroon—Al aaraf 201

TAQWA OR PIETY IS ACHIEVED WITH PRACTICE

When we admit a child for the first time in a school, on the first day he is neither able to read nor write. He gets motivated to do any schoolwork in the beginning with difficulty. But when he is slowly initiated into reading and writing, he makes rapid progress. In time he will not have any difficulty in coping with his lessons.

Same is the case of taqwa or piety. Man has to strive to abstain from committing sins. Whenever he finds a situation to commit a sin, he should control himself and avoid committing it. The way a child gets used to reading and writing and becomes comfortable at these skills after some time, similarly when one tries with full determination to shun sinning, in good time he will be able to totally stop these undesirable acts. At this stage Allah will put a light in his heart that makes avoiding sins easier for him. He will have so much control on his tongue that even for the kingdom of the entire world, he would not tell a lie.

The same sins, the avoidance of which was next to impossible for him, now become very difficult to commit! Man should make efforts to inculcate such will power that he is able to avoid commitment of sins with ease. With this faculty in his heart, he will draw pleasure from the success of his efforts.

No doubt Allah doesn't like infidelity in his creatures. *" He has made faith (eemaan) dear for them. He has made it the adornment for their hearts. And has created abhorrence in him for Infidelity and disobedience."*

At last a sinner starts disliking sins. He achieves the state of Taqwa where sin appears bitter than the bitterest thing and every small evil act seems the most evil. He thinks that every sin, howsoever minor, worth reproaching to the maximum extent.

The highest level of piety is cultivated after much practice and constant effort. There are a few stages and ranks of this piety.

SHUNNING DOUBTFUL THINGS

OR MUSHTABAHAAT

When a person gets used to avoiding taboo things and depending only on fair living, he advances one step, and with more effort he also avoids use of things which give him some doubt of their being legitimate. Therefore, he not only

avoids the use of haram objects but also abstains from things about which he has the slightest doubt of being haram.

He also abstains from uttering such words that Allah might dislike the use of. In stages he achieves total avoidance of the use of doubtful things in his day to day living.

SHUNNING OF THE UNBECOMING

OR MAKROOHAAT

The man now reaches a higher state of piety when he shuns the unbecoming (makroohaat) and the stage is set for the use of only the desirables (mustaheb). Now he has reached such a high state of piety that he does not avoid the desirables although he knows that they are not mandatory and not binding on him. He also meticulously avoids doing or using unbecoming (makrooh) things that are, no doubt, not totally banned.

SHUNNING THE PERMISSIBLE

FOR SHUNNING THE TABOO

He becomes careful in the use of such permissible things that give him doubt that their use might make him avoid certain mandatory things.

For example, it is permissible to remain awake till mid-night in conversation with friends. In that time there can be two or three rounds of eating snacks. But, if one sleeps late on a full stomach, he might find it difficult to stir out of his bed for the *Fajr* prayer that is mandatory. Therefore, a pious person develops such a faculty in his nature that he takes care to avoid every permissible thing that might cause difficulty in performance of his mandatory duties.

SAVING A COIN A DAY FOR USE

DURING RAMADAN

A baker was our friend. He was very skillful and capable in his trade. The month of Ramadan came during summer one year. He took off from work the whole month of Ramadan to avoid the excessive heat of his work place, while he fasted. He could do it by cleverly putting aside a coin from his earnings every day for the eleven months previous to Ramadan to meet his expenses when he closed his shop during the fasting month.

Although spending this coin every day was permissible and well within his rights, the baker wanted to prepare himself properly for the fasting in Ramadan that is mandatory!

TRAVEL BECOMES THE REASON

FOR AVOIDING THE MANDATORY DUTIES

It is narrated that a person went to Imam (a.s.) and said, " I am required to travel to a cold country. These days there is so much snow fall there that the entire land is covered with it. It is difficult to get water for *wadu (the ablution)* nor is it possible to do *tayyamum (* the dry ablution). In such a situation what instructions you give me about performance of the mandatory prayers?"

The Imam got angry on him and said, " Why are you undertaking such a journey that can disrupt you obligatory matters of faith? When you are aware that because of your travelling on business to that place your taqwa (piety) is affected, then you must avoid such travel"

When attending a gathering is permissible, but there is likelihood of undesirable things happening there, then it is better to avoid attending the party.

But all these doubts and confusions are for people with weak faiths, a man of piety will never falter from the right course.

THE MATERIAL CAPACITIES

There are certain permissible acts that might make a person commit haram actions. He thinks that in a material sense these acts have lot of meaning. Although an act might be mustaheb (desirable) or mubah (permissible) the man of piety keeps a close watch on its implications and consequences. He seriously considers what effect the performance of the act might have on him. Then only he ventures to embark on performing it.

In our daily lives why there is waste and profligacy ? What use spending lives on unproductive acts? When people don’t help their poor relatives and friends cutting into their legitimate expenses, and make heavy expenses through loans on pomp and show, their prayers are nothing short of hypocrisy. They may not be rewarded in the Hereafter.

Taking interest in the pleasures of life is not haram. It is in fact legitimate and permissible. But when such things are given unnecessary importance, there can be the likelihood of *Qata e Rahem* or depriving the near of kin of their legitimate rights and privileges. Even sometimes people fulfill their desire for pomp by meeting the high expenses with loans. Thus they might incur the risk of rendering their acts haram.

Another example is that good humor is permissible. In certain circumstances it is desirable too. But we see that in excess, this permissible act ends into practical jokes and results in the heart- burn for the persons who are the subject of the humor. This can be tantamount to hurting the feelings of *momins* and is haram.

Therefore it is necessary to adopt Taqwa and extravagant indulgence in the material needs and excessive jest and humor must be avoided.

In a nutshell, there are three stages of taqwa:

Firstly: mastery in avoiding sins.

Secondly: Mastery in abstaining from the doubtful and the unbecoming things, and

Thirdly: avoiding such permissible acts that might be the precursors of sins.

THE SECOND ASPECT

OF ISTA-AAZA

TAZAKKAR

OR

REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

THE FOURTEENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taef min ash Shaitan tazkaru fa aza hum mubseroon- Al Aaraf 201

The second aspect of *Ista-aaza* is *Tazakkar,* the remembrance and talk about Allah. A person who acquires Taqwa or piety becomes free of the domination of Satan. As long as the influence of Satan on the person persists, he remains incapable of effective *Ista-aaza.* Satan keeps going round the hearts of the men of piety to catch a chance of entering therein. But when these pious persons busy themselves in the Remembrance of Allah, then there is a lightning of

Allah’s Blessing and the net spread by Satan becomes visible to them in the momentary illumination. This puts the pious persons out of harms way.

Now, let us consider what is Allah’s intent about *Tadakkar* in the oft-quoted verse during our discussions.

THE THOUGHT OF SIN AND REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

In *Tafseer e Burhan* commenting 0n this Verse, Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s.) quotes from Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) an incident that we are summarising here. When a *momin* suddenly gets the thought of crime in his mind, the Satan and his retainers make their maximum efforts to make the person put his thought to action. But in that moment the pious person remembers Allah and he abandons the thought of committing the sin.

There are also stages of Remembrance of Allah that are different according to the place and the situation. One of those situations is that when the thought of sin comes in the mind of the person, the instigator and prompter is Satan and the opposition of this enemy is necessary. And also the pious person is in oath with Allah that he will not follow Satan because the accursed creature is his sworn enemy. He should therefore not break his oath and instead of becoming *Abd e Rehman* (worshipper of Allah) become *Abd e Shaitan* (worshipper of Satan). Therefore, it is imperative that he keeps firmly to his oath and he should strive to resist Satan who can only bring destruction and perfidy.

Alam ahda elaikum yaa bani aadama an la taabudu washaitana innahu lakum adoowun mubeen.

Enjoined I not on you O’ children of Adam! That ye could worship not Satan for he is your open enemy.60.36 (Al Yasin)

Wa laqad azalla minkum jibilan kateeran afalam takunu taaqeloon

And yet hath he led astray a great multitude of you ; Did ye not then understand.

. At another place in the Holy Quran it is said that Allah has decided that those who follow Satan, Satan will push them into the abyss of darkness and take them into the blistering Fires of Hell. When a person adopts satanic thoughts and considers the temptations of Iblees worth pursuing, then Allah closes all the avenues of salvation for him and consigns him to the Hell.

REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

RELIEVES FROM SATANIC FEARS

Whenever satanic fears start getting into the heart, the man of piety busies himself in Remembering Allah. He thinks that if he committed the sin, he will be pushed away from Allah's Blessing. What use will be the wretched life then!

It is quite possible that Satan, in his renewed attempt, puts a thought in the heart of the person that he was depriving himself of the pleasure of sin. The door of repentance was always open for him. The man of piety will then reply to Satan that what is the guarantee that he will get the chance of offering penitence for the sin. Even if he is able to do it, what is the surety that it would be accepted? In the end the Remembrance of Allah doesn't allow Satan to gain an upper hand over the man of piety.

Sometimes Satan puts a fear in the heart of the man of Taqwa that he was encouraging him to commit only a minor sin. But the heart busy in Remembrance of Allah replies, " Run away! You accursed one! Disobedience Allah, anyhow, is a major sin.

Sometimes Iblees the accursed threatens the man of piety that if he didn't comply with his advice, his end will be very pitiable. Sometimes he gives him false hopes that the results of sins will be good. Satan'sadvice influences only those who befriend him, the Satan.

Innama zalakum ash Shaitan yaqawwaf auliaha

Satan can threaten only his followers with the consequences of disobeying him.

But the man of piety gets the understanding with Remembrance of Allah. The disturbing thoughts that come to the mind are only the doubts and fears created by Satan. The man of Taqwa, no doubt, fears only Allah. Allah says, " Fear only Me if you are a Momin!"

BEING PROUD OF ONE'S PRAYERS

AND SUPPLICATIONS

Sometimes Satan tricks men into becoming proud of their prayers and the love for the Ahl al Bayt. For example, he says, " How nice! You have gone on several pilgrimages to *Karbala Mualla!* You must have done innumerable good deeds during the visits to the Holy place. Hussain (a.s.) will certainly intercede on your behalf. Now, no sin can bring retribution to you."

But the *momin* instead of becoming proud and conceited with such praises, should reply, " If I commit any sins, my intercessors (*the Ahl al Bayt*) will be upset with me. This sin will become a curtain between me and Imam Hussain (a.s.). Allah only knows how far I would be pushed away from my intercessors by committing one sin! Feeling proud of the felicity of the *ziarat* of Imam Hussain in itself is a sin that might deprive me of his (the Imam's) intercession."

A man of Taqwa can certainly be proud of its spiritual felicity, but the pride can only be manifested as *Tashakkur* or gratefulness. This expression of gratitude

will not require any sermonizing from outside. Sermonizing becomes necessary when the person himself is not aware of his felicity and feels no urge to express his gratefulness to the Creator for that. Hazrat Ameer al Momineen (a.s.) says, " Truly felicitous person is one who is the preacher and sermonizer for himself!"

SATANIC FEARS IN A STATE OF ANGER

It happens that people sometimes become angry while they have a heated exchange of words. As a result of the altercation one might use abusive language. Satan tempts the other party to reciprocate in the same language and tenor. But if he is a man of Taqwa, he immediately controls himself by Remembering Allah. His mind suggests to him that if he behaved the same way as the opponent had behaved, then what would be the difference between the two. The opponent had used uncouth language and had followed the dictates of Satan. If you do likewise, you too will render yourself the follower of Satan. With the beneficence of *Dikr of Allah* his conscience will guide him to give a befitting reply to the opponent --- "*Wa iza khatib hum al johala qaalu salama---when the ignorant speak with them in a foul manner, they reply to them gently and with equanimity."* It is better If, because of the *Dikr* of Allah, the person is able to dispel the fear and confusion from his mind. Otherwise, the dispute can become a haranguing contest, each flinging foul-words on the other and might even result in physical assault. If, at the rudimentary stage of the dispute, effort was made to cool down the other party, the matter could have been sorted out without much ado!

Now we can see at length how people get entangled in the web of Satan. Even those who call themselves men of taqwa are not immune from this. If they don't busy themselves in *Tadakkar,* they most likely would fall in the trap sometime or other.

Presence of a moralizer and preacher is absolutely necessary for the heart of every person to keep him warned not to become a victim of false pride and abstain from childish actions. Remember! A real man is one who always keeps the end in view. For example, when one keeps his cool during a heated

argument with another person, the matter can be sorted out amicably. If this amicable nature is not there, how many persons would suffer tremendous losses fighting over trivial things with a sense of false pride. In such disputes Satan plays a very crucial role to create rifts and commission of sins by the litigants.

It is necessary for every *momin* to keep the intercession of *Tadakkar* in his daily life. In the past there were such *momins* who dug their own graves during their life times and used to recite the Holy Quran sitting inside these trenches. They did this to remind themselves of the Hereafter and the interior of the graves was illuminated with the felicity of Tadakkar.

ABOUT HAZQEEL

It is narrated that when Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) committed his initial fault, and he went lamenting through hills and dales in penitence, he reached the cave inside which Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s.), Prophet, was busy in supplication.

When Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s) heard the moaning of the hills and the beasts, he understood that Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) had come to him. The reason for this was that when Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) recited the Zaboor, the flora, fauna and the stones too joined him in the recitation. Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) reached the entrance of the cave and called, " O Sarqeel (a.s.)! Do you permit me to come up to you?" Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s.) said, " Please don’t come to me because you are a sinner!" But Allah sent a Revelation to him, " Because of Dawood (a.s)’s first sin, don’t reprimand him. To the contrary pray to Us for his pardon and well being! Whenever we leave anyone to his own scruples, he might commit a mistake!"

Now Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s) caught hold of Hazrat Dawood (a.s)'s hand and guided him inside the cave.

Hazrat dawood (a.s) asked Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s), " O Hazqel (a.s.)! Have you ever thought of committing a sin?"

He replied, " No! Never!"

Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, " Did you ever feel proud?"

He replied, " No! Never!"

Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, " Have you ever been tempted with the worldly pleasures?"

Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s.) replied, " Yes! I was tempted!"

Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, " Then ! What remedy you use against these temptations?"

He replied, " In such circumstances I get into this cave and take pity from what I witness therin."

Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) then entered into the recesses of the cave with Hazrat Hazqeel (a.s.) He found inside there a plate of steel. On the plate was lying a human skeleton and beside it was a tablet of steel on which was inscribed :

"*I Arwai bin Shalam*

ruled for a thousand years,

established a thousand cities,

deflowered a thousand virgins.

But,

My condition is this

That my bed is dust

My pillow a stone

And

My body is the

Dwelling place of

Insects and vermin.

Whoever sets eye on me

Should not be carried away

With worldly attractions!"

Ref: Ain al Hayat, Page 178

A BED OF TWO HANDS FULL OF DUST

Imagine a person who was an emperor of great pomp and pageant, was reduced to be put in a desolate cave and his mortal remains were lying on a steel sheet in dust. He had insects and vermin crawling all over his mortal remains. A *momin* must take a lesson from this incident. If he had obeyed Satan and his baser instincts, and ran after the worldly things, how long will the party last? A person who strives too hard for his selfish ends forgets that he has to die inevitably and all the paraphernalia that he accumulates will have to be left behind. He should pray that whatever benefits and blessings he enjoyed, his end should not be like of the mighty king whose story is narrated here.

Our topic of discussion is *Tadakkar.* A person who leaves himself uncontrolled and doesn't remember Allah, h will he will be nowhere (like a rudder less ship). Man should strive to be like a mountain in his moral behavior. One who is vulnerable to the wave of doubts created by Satan, He should ensure that the glitter of the world doesn't overwhelm him. This is possible if he keeps in mind the inevitable end that every mortal being is destined to!

MUST VISIT THE CEMETRIES

It is very necessary that one's own conscience becomes his warner. In the Islamic Shariah it has been very strongly prescribed to visit the graves, particularly those of one's parents. Why this exhortation? This is because one recitation *al Fateha* at the graveside of his parents will result in rewards for them. He should give *sadaqa* (alms) for the propitiation of their souls. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) has asked people to visit the grave of their parents that it is the place from where prayers made by them will be answered.

The biggest benefit of visiting the graves of the parents is that it will make the person aware of the fact if the parent is not there with him, he too will have to follow suit some time in the future. This will give him the realization that he should not be attracted much to the transient world. He will then learn to dispel the satanic fears and apprehensions. He will start remembering Allah and think of the Day of Judgement!

HAZRAT FATIMA ZEHRA (A.S.) AT THE GRAVESIDE OF HER GRAND UNCLE

The *Siddiqa e Akbar,* Hazrat Fatima Zehra (a.s.), after the sad demise of her father (a.s.), had to experience very audacious treatment from some persons that she fell ill under the pressure of these happenings. Even then, on every Monday and Thursday, with the permission of her husband, she visited the grave of her great-uncle, Hazrat Hamza and other martyrs in Ohud.

Even the Prophet (a.s.) during his last illness, despite severe fever and weakness, used to ask some persons to put their shoulders under his arms and take him to the graveyard.

O Allah! Do make us *Ahl e Dikr wa tazakkar,* in the name of Mohammed (as.) and his Holy Progeny (a.s.).

THE FIFTEENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innal lazeena attaqau iza massahum taefum min ash Shaitan tazzakaru fa iza hum mubseroon—Al Aaraf 201

Last evening our talk dwelt on the second aspect of *Ista-aaza, Tadakkar.* Today we shall discuss some more meanings of *Tadakkar* in respect of the fears created by Satan.

There is a tradition of the Prophet of Islam (a.s.), the authenticity of which is universally accepted by all the schools of thought. The tradition has also been quoted very much. The Prophet (a.s.) has said, " *Actions are of three types: the actions of righteous guidance, the misleading actions and the actions that are mid way between the first two categories."*

THE THINGS THAT ARE DEFINITELY GOOD—

THE ACTIONS OF RIGHTEOUS GUIDANCE

Whatever thoughts come to the mind of a person whether to perform an action or not, depend on the consideration of the three categories of actions mentioned above. If it is sure that the action that a person is about to perform is certainly good, and to his righteous advantage, then pure (*Rehmani)* feelings will develop in his heart. He will get the urge to go ahead with the performance of the act. If you have such feelings about any act that you wish to perform, and you are sure that it is a hundred percent virtuous deed, and you don't have the slightest doubt or fear about its veracity, then you must go ahead doing it with full determination and firmness. Such actions are deemed obligatory to be performed tacitly.

THE ACTIONS THAT ARE DEFINITELY WRONG---

THE MISLEADING ACTIONS

If you get the thought of performing an action about which you are certain that it is satanic, and you know that it's performance might cause unrest, despite the urge to go ahead with it, you must have access to *Tadakkar* and abstain from doing it. Because of your awareness of Allah's Commandments, if you consider doing such acts as taboo, it will be a befitting precept in total consonance with the words "*fa iza hum mubseroon"*

WHEN THERE IS A DOUB ABOUT ACTS---

WHETHER RIGHTEOUS OR TABOO

The third type of actions are those about which one is not sure whether they are righteous (*Rehmani)* or wrong (Shaitani). There are certain lawful acts about which we have doubts in our minds. We have to arrive at a decision whether to perform them or not.

Those who are perfect in piety, are the choicest in the reckoning of Allah. Their intuition tells them whether an act is really good or not. Their vision is so powerful that they have a clear understanding of what act is *Rehmani* and which is *Satanic.* But such men of high piety are few and far between.

CARE IS THE GUARANTEE OF DELIVERENCE

Those who are in the lower rungs of the roster of men of piety, they too draw benefit from *Tadakkar* and don't decide to perform an act till they are sure and confident that it is righteous (*Rehmani).* They will not do it till they are doubly sure howsoever attractive it might seem to them. They are conscious that performing the act, ignorantly, might harm their faith. Therefore it is said, "*Qif indal Shubh—When you have a doubt about an act being Rehmani or Satanic, better wait!"* The morsel about which one has doubt whether it is *halal* or *haram,* he should rather wait till he makes it sure.

THE TOUCHSTONE

In the *Islamic Shariah* there are clear cut norms for removing doubts and fears and for arriving at the righteousness or otherwise of acts. These norms must be brought to the knowledge of people of piety that they can abide by them. The standard set by the revered and Infallible personalities is : Every act that is to

satisfy the psyche of the person will be Satanic. And the act that is contrary to his desire, will be righteous and Rehmani.

There are certain acts towards which the psyche is attracted. For example: A person has to go on a journey that is not against his liking, but he doesn't know if the action has the approval of Allah or not. Or perhaps Satan is instigating him to go on the trip. Sometimes the man is inordinately attracted to take a journey. In such a situation he should realize that the initiator of the idea is definitely some satanic thought that wishes to involve him in some *haram* act or atleast to deprive him of a legitimate act.

When you feel that your conscience is not willing to perform some act, then it is a *Rehmani* instinct, you must go ahead in performing it.

Another thing should not remain hidden that this standard is not for everyone. Because mostly people are inclined towards human desires and these realities have nothing to do with them.

ISTEKHARA, OR AUGURY,

GUIDES IN SITUATIONS OF DOUBT

It has been narrated that when you are at the cross-roads, and do not know which is the righteous (*Rehmani)* way and which is the wrong one (*Shaitani),* then doing *Istakhara* (augury) with Allah that the righteous path can be determined.

Istakhara, or augury, is *talb al khair min Allah* (Seeking good from Allah) saying, " O Allah! I am in doubt. I don't know if there is Your approval for my doing this task or not. With Your Munificence make evident Your guidance in the matter."

This is a situation of prayer, and in *Istakhara* always there is a strong element of prayer to Allah.

SOME PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND ISTAKHARA

Muslims have adopted a bad habit that they started using *Istakhara* for matters connected with monetary benefit. This, truly, is not *istakhara. Istakhara,* in fact, is a prayer by virtue of which a person seeks Allah’s wish if performance of a particular act would be in his best interest or not.

IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.) DOES ISTAKHARA

AT THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE PROPHET (a.s.)

Imam Hussain (a.s.) went to the mausoleum of his grand father, the Prophet of Islam (a.s.) and after much grieving entreated Allah, " O my Sustainer! You know I am practicing, *amr bil maaroof nahi an il munkar*, treading on the righteous path and denying the taboo. In this matter kindly give me guidance." Then the Prophet (a.s.), with Allah’s orders, informed Imam Hussain (a.s.) that he must proceed to Karbala.

It is better we quote here Imam Zain al Abedeen (a.s.). He says in one of the supplications in *Sahifa e Sajjadia*, " O Allah! Whenever my heart is confused with two thoughts. One thought for performance of an act that might be approved by You and the other, perhaps, not to Your liking and instigated by Satan. Then O Allah! Mould my determination and decision the way You approve of!"

ISTAKHARA WITH THE ROSARY

OR THROUGH THE HOLY QURAN

If prayer dispels your doubts and confusion, it is very well. Otherwise, you are within your rights to do *Istakhara* with the rosary or from the pages of the Holy Quran. But there are two conditions for doing this. One is that you must be in a state of supplication while doing the augury (*Istakhara).* The other condition is that you can correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Quran when doing *Istakhara* through it’s pages. One should also be in a position to interpret the correct purport from the meanings.

STRANGE STORIES ABOUT ISTAKHARA

In Isfahan an important person suffered from measles. After treatment he was put on a strict diet regimen. He was particularly warned against over eating. During his period of convalescence he was invited at the place of a leading cleric. When the table was arranged with numerous types of mouth -watering dishes, the person’s mouth started watering. But he also had the fear that if he went against the regimen and ate well, it might be harmful for him. He also thought that if he didn’t eat properly, the host might feel bad. He therefore did *Istakhara* from the Quran. He saw the 69th verse of *Surat an Nahl* when he opened the book:

Summa kulli min kullis samarate fasluki subula rabbeka zululz…

"Then eat thou of all the fruits and walk thou in the ways of Thy Lord submissively…"

This verse relates to the honeybees that received revelation to eat from all the fruits and manufacture lot of honey. The person interpreted from the verse that he had the permission to eat. Since he was on a strict diet for many days, he enjoyed all the sumptuous fare with great relish. The excess of eating resulted in deterioration of his condition and he had to go straight to his grave from the party!

After this event when there was a discussion about *Istkhara,* one scholar said, " The verse seen during the *Istkhara* pertains to the honeybees who pick up a little nectar from each flower. If the person had also tasted a little from each of

the dishes served, and not eaten like a glutton, he would have suffered no harm."

The purpose of relating this tale is to impress on people that doing *Istakhara* and interpreting the meaning and purport from the verses is not easy. This can be done only by the learned.

THE PURPOSE OF REVELATION OF THE HOLY QURAN IS NOT FOR ISTAKHARA

The Holy Quran is not revealed for the purpose of *Istekhata* but for the Understanding of Allah by His creatures and for inculcating the high moral values. Its purpose is not to show to the reader whether any worldly actions are beneficial to him or not. Such reference to the Book is not *Istakhara;* but it is soothsaying.

The standards prescribed for us to judge the veracity or usefulness of acts have to be understood properly and to be acted upon implicitly. Every matter that appears burdensome on the baser instincts of a person is *Rehmani,* legitimate. Spending in the way of Allah doesn't make a person poor, although his instinct asks him to take care while making such expense!

With the compliance of aforementioned conditions, we are not in opposition to access to *Istakhara.* After every compulsory prayer we supplicate, " O Allah! With your Munificence and Grace guide me!" This supplication should be made with the single purpose of asking for His Grace. In fact one should pray to Allah thus, " O Allah! Keep me safe from perfidy and shame! O Allah! Prevent me from the influence of evil thoughts and keep me under Your protection!"

DOING SOOTHSAYING FROM THE HOLY QURAN IS NOT PROPER

Such *Istakhara* and soothsaying from the Quran that is for the purpose of predicting the future are not permissible. For example: When a mother has to get her daughter wedded, gets an *Istakhara* to ascertain how the girl's future will be. For this purpose she goes to a venerable person. He predicts that the future for the marriage is not going to be good. The mother then worries. Then she goes to another person. He predicts that the match is good and augurs well for the future. She is now confused. She thinks how the same thing could get diametrically opposite result when she asked for a *istakhara* for the same.

She must therefore seriously think about the premise on which she sought such a prediction. She should seek the answer from the sacred *Shariah.*

PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ISTAKHARA

Allama Majlisi has written a treatise "*Mafateeh al Ghaib"* in which he has entered a collection of traditions about *Istakhara.* Other scholars too have published essays. Even then people are ignorant about the true facts.

Allama Majlisi, in the beginning of the book, has written about the merits of *Istakhara* and the need for it. He quotes some narratives to prove that one has to seek Allah's help in all matters.

THE TYPES OF ISTAKHARA

1. For every task that you undertake, you should seek Allah’s support and pray for good end to your efforts. Whatever the end result, remain consigned to Allah’s wish.
2. After seeking Allah’s support, rivet your attention to your heart and act according to the signal you get from there.
3. After seeking Allah’s support, consult some sagacious *Momin* and act on the matter according to his advice.
4. Do *Istakhara* through the Quran, the rosary, through chits or marble like balls.

The Allama says that, " in several traditions there is a pointer towards the first type of *Istakhara.* Several other scholars, like Sheik Mufeed, Allama Toosi and Ibne Idrees are hesitant about the fourth type of *Istakhara.* But, since there are traditions in support of all the four types of *Istakhara,* we cannot reject any of the four methods. Any way, the first three ways of doing the *Istakhara* are very appropriate, which in our times are almost defunct."

Several youths come during their examination times and want a *Istakhara* to be done whether they stand a chance of passing the examination or not. In brief, we want to mention about the edict of *Shariah* in such matters. We request you to communicate these words to others in your circle that people better shun their wrong ways and do not pollute their faith with silly habits.

CLEAR WARNINGS ABOUT ISTAKHARA

About *Istakhara* all schools agree that the Prophet (a.s.) has advised that this should not be avoided for any small or big task.

Ameer al Momineen (a.s.) says, " During my journey to Yemen, on which I went on the orders of the Prophet (a.s.), besides other instructions, he said, ‘ O Ali! During this journey never forget to see the *Istakhara* at every stage.’ One who does *Istakhara* will never have troubles nor one who consults others will ever repent."

Every Imam has exhorted his successor about the *Istakhara* as he has done about the recitation of the Quran.

This *Istakhara* about which so much has been said is not just seeing the odd and even of the beads of the rosary. But the purpose is to seek good from Allah (*Talab al khaira min Allah).* In every task that you do, you must seek Allah's help and pleasure!

There are several traditions about the method and prayer for *Istakhara.* One is that for routine works, one should say seven times, " *Astakhair Allah berehmate khairat fi aafiah".* For important matters like travel, business deals or surgeries repeat the same words a hundred and one times. If the words are said in a state of prostration, it would be better. And if the words are repeated in the prostration after a optional prayer, and better after the optional prayer following the mandatory morning prayer (*Fajr).*

In another tradition it is narrated from Imam Zain al Abedeen (a.s.) that the words of *Istakhara* should be repeated ten times for routine matters and two hundred times for important matters like journeys, *Umrah* etc.

People have been very strongly advised to seek help in their matters from Allah in a state of prostration. That is the time when one is nearest to Allah. If men make this their habit and practice, and never divert from it, then all actions will be felicitous. If a person has any doubt about this, he should study in depth the methods for removing the doubts recorded in the Pure Shariah.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REMOVING DOUBTS

The best suggestion is that which is in according to the *Nass (categorical order)* of the Quran, and is not taken from any person other than one falling in the four following categories:

1. Wise, shrewd and far-sighted. It need not be said that seeking suggestions from foolish persons will be futile.
2. One who is religious and pious. Seeking suggestions from a faithless and careless person is not desirable. When a person doesn’t care for Allah, how one can expect that he would care for ordinary mortals.
3. One who is your friend and well-wisher. A person who is one’s adversary one cannot seek advice from.
4. A person who is your confidante and doesn’t brag about your matters to others.

If any person has all the four qualities, he can always be consulted on important matters. Allah, from whom you have sought help in your matters, will convey to you through the advice of the person of your chice about the best course you must adopt in your matters.

THE HOLY IMAMS (A.S.) USED TO TAKE ADVICE

Allama Majlisi quotes from Imam Reza (a.s.) that he said, " My revered father, Imam Moosa ibne Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.). despite being of the highest intellect, used to consult with his slave occasionally. For example: Whenever he embarked on some important task, he used to seek the advice of the clever slave. If performance of that task was advisable, he would go ahead with it."

" The Imam was once asked by some one, ‘Although you are the Imam of the times, you are taking advice from a slave! Being the Imam you should have knowledge of everything.’ He replied, ‘ What do you know! Is it not possible that Allah wishes to enlighten me about certain matters through his mouth?’"

Whenever one is in a doubt and confusion about matters, he should act in accordance with Allah's injunction in the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet and the Imams (a.s).

ISTAKHARA THROUGH CHITS

At times when no advice is available or the available advice doesn't agree with that given by other equally competent persons, For example: you have taken the advice of a person keeping in mind the four established norms and he approved of your contention. The same matter, when referred to another person of the same competence was not approved by him. In such an event, to remove the doubt and confusion, you will have to follow the following procedure:

Take six equal pieces or chits of paper. On each chit write, "*Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem. Khairat min Allahil hakeem lafalan bin falan (write your and your father's names)."* Then on three of the chits write, " *Afal"* and on the remaining three write, *"la tafal"*.

Keep all the six chits under the prayer mat and offer two *rakaat* of *Istakhara* prayer. After the salutation or during the last prostration of the prayer recite a hundred times the following words, " *Astakhair allahi berehmatehi khairat fi aafia'* Now that the prayer is complete, retrieve the chits from under the mat and shuffle them. After this exercise pick the chits one after the other. If on three consecutive chits it is inscribed, "*Afal",* then it is very good and you can go ahead with the performance of the task you intend to. If three consecutive chits have written on them,"*La tafal",* then you will have to abstain from doing the task. If you have picked up five chits, one after the other, alternatively with the inscription of "*Afal"* and *"la tafal"* alternately in that order, then if three of the five chits have written "*Afal"* on them, then you must go ahead with your task. But if three of these chits have inscribed on them "*La tafal"* then you must refrain from performing the task.

The chits should better be of the same paper, of the same color and of the same dimension.

If a person doesn't have time for the *Namaz e Istakhara* and the prayers mentioned above. Then, if he has good comprehension of the verses of the Holy Quran, and is capable of interpretation of the verses, in relation to the task

for which the *Istakhara* is being performed, he can as well make access to the Quran for his augury.

Sheik Toosi (r.a) has narrated in his book *"Tehzeeb"* that Yasa bin Abdallah Qummi came one day to Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) and said, " I intend to perform a task but I am unable to arrive at a firm decision for or against doing it." The Imam (a.s.) said, " When you stand up with the intention of prayer, then think what your heart feels about the matter. Act on that; because that is the time whem Satan is the farthest away from the man. Or you can open the pages of the Holy Quran at that time and act according to the interpretation you derive from the verse that meets your eyes."

DOING ISTAKHARA FOR OTHERS

The practice of our times is to write *nek* (auspicious) or *bud* (unfavorable)

On the Holy Quran, or we approach a scholar for doing the *Istakhara.* Allama Majlisi says that even for the sake of example we don't have any tradition of the Prophet (a.s.) or the Ahl al Bayt (a.s) that a Shia went to any Imam (a.s.) for the purpose of *Istakhara.* Therefore, there is no precedent that can be quoted in support of our practice in this matter. There are certain clerics who don't agree to do *Istakhara* for others. But Allama Majlisi and some other scholars approve that those who cannot do the *Istakhara* themselves, can nominate another capable person as *vakeel* (representative) to open the Holy Book and do the *Istakhara* for him. The condition is that the person who opens the Book should be in proper physical condition at the time and is conversant with the meanings of the verses of the Quran.

Many jurists consider *istakhara* as not legitimate. They say that there is no need to do the *Istakhara* and one must act and trust his affairs to the Will of Allah.

The conclusion is that we shall seek good (*khair)* from Allah in our affairs and that is the crux of *Istakhara.*

THE THIRD ASPECT

TAWAKKAL OR
TRUST IN ALLAH

THE SIXTEENTH TALK

Bismillahir Rehman ir Raheem

Innahu lahu sultanun alal lazeena aamanu wa ala Rabbehim behi mushrekoon

"Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord"—Al Nahl 99

TAWAKKAL OR TRUST IN ALLAH

ESSENTIAL PART OF PRACTICING

MONOTHEISM

The topic of *Tawakkal* is one of the most important of the aspects of the Religion of Islam because the essential part of monotheism is absolute trust in Allah. In other words a Muslim is one who seeks succor only from Allah for deriving benefits and warding off of losses. In fact this is the meaning and purport of *la ilaha ilAllah wa lahaula wa la quwwata illa billa al ali al azeem. Hauqala* or saying *la haula wa la quwatta illa billa* is the key to the Heaven and the practical expression of monotheism by the believer. Thus it is the expression by the person that he is not an independent entity who has to depend on Allah's Wish in all matters. It is his duty to believe in the *musab a bab asbaab* (the doer of things), that is Allah, the Creator of the Existence. He should realize and believe in the fact that with the utterance of a single word, "*Kun",* became the cause of creation of the creatures in the Universe. He should also have belief in the fact that the very existence of the universe is the miraculous phenomenon of the *Musab ba bab Haqeeqi* or the real doer of things and the absolute Creator, that is Allah and not something that evolved by itself.

DEPENDENCE ON ALLAH

FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE TASKS

THAT ONE STRIVES

TO DO

Man must strive to achieve objectives but he must leave the success or failure of his efforts to *Musab ba bab Asbaab*. The source of strength for the worldly gains or losses and the Rewards in the Hereafter for the person should be the absolute trust in Allah. His faith about the worldly affairs should be that if Allah Wished he would certainly be successful in his efforts. About the Rewards of the Hereafter, he should always remember that he has to abide by Allah's Commands implicitly and trust in His beneficence.

Allah commands that man must strive for his worldly affairs, but he should be away from greed and avarice. He should definitely make efforts to acquire the worldly comforts but he should not go near taboo things. When a person's attorney wants him to bring all his documents to the court, can he refuse to do that? When he has thought that he is incapable of handling his case himself, he has retained the attorney. Then he has to trust him and proceed according to the advice tendered by him.

ESSENTIAL TO HAVE

A WAKIL OR ATTORNEY

O man! You are helpless and cannot be successful in this world nor in the hereafter on your own! If you have Trust in a Power, then in times of trouble you will not be shaky because your Wakil is there to help you.

Don't you recite as an after-prayer (*Taaqeeb*) the following words: "*Tawakkalto alal hai al lazi la yamoot- I truat my affairs to the Ever Living and Undying Allah"*. He is the Greatest Wakil and the best help---*Naym al wakil, naym al wali wa naym al naseer.*

SATAN RUNS AWAY FROM THE MUTAWAKKIL

OR THE ONE RESIGNED TO THE WILL OF ALLAH

It has been narrated that when a person stirs out of his house in the morning, the satans will be waiting for him at the threshold. But when he steps out of the house and says, " *Aamanto billahi tawakkalto al Allah—have faith only on You and only on Your trust I go to transact my worldly affairs."* Then the satans will slink away.

These words can be said in any language, it doesn't matter. The words are a support for the heart and surety for the life of the person. It is a fact that if you trust your Wakil, He is Omnipotent and can keep away from you all difficulties and hardships. He will help you get all the profits that He deems are legitimate. There is none more generous and powerful than Allah.

IBN E ZUBAIR'S REBELLION

AFTER THE EVENT OF

KARBALA

At this juncture I remember a tradition quoted in the *Usool e Kaafi.* Abdallah bin Zubair, who was one of the sworn enemies of the Progeny of the Prophet (a.s.), and even in the sermon of the Friday Prayers he avoided saying the *Durood* (benediction) on the Prophet (a.s.). When people protested against this practice, he said, " Benediction on the Prophet (a.s.) is void without reference to his progeny. But if I refer to his progeny in the sermon, then many will lose their necks!"

Coming back to the main subject: after the event of Karbala, Abdallah bin Zubair rose in rebellion in Mecca Mukarrama and made a claim for the Caliphate. Some groups from Iraq joined him and slightly improved his strength.

The accursed Yazid, who was looking for an opportunity that some one raised his voice to give a justification for his harassing the people with an iron fist. Abdallah bin Zubair gave him this opportunity by claiming control over the Hejaz.

Yazid then sent Muslim bin Uqba and Haseen bin Nameer with a huge force towards Hijaz and asked them to go via Madina Munawwara and make a general massacre there to the maximum possible extent.

IMAM ZAIN AL ABEDEEN

AND A SAINTLY

PERSONALITY

On one hand there was the scheming of Ibn e Zubair and on the other yazid's hordes. It was only after a few days of the tragic events of Karbala that Syed Sajjad (a.s.) had returned home to Madina. He was very worried of the developments and expressed his fears to Abu Hamza on the matter in the following words: " I emerged out of my home and reclined on this wall (*perhaps, by wall he means the ramparts of the city of Madina*). Suddenly I noticed a person clad in two pieces of white cloth who stood in front of me and said,

"Ali bin al Hussain (a.s.) ! What is the reason that you look worried? Are you worried because of worldly difficulties? If such is the case, you should not worry because Allah is the Sustainer and gives livelihood to all."

I replied, " I don't have any care for the world!"

The man asked, " Then, are you worried for the Hereafter? Then this matter too is not to worry about! Allah's promise is true and He will support you!"

" I am not concerned about the Hereafter either!" I replied.

" Then why do you look worried?" the man asked.

I said, " I am worried about the intrigues of Ibne Zubair."

The reason for the Imam (a.s)'s worries were the machinations of that sworn enemy of the Ahl al Bayt and the attack of the hordes of Yazid. The third fear,

which was not unfounded, was the attack by Hajjaj on the orders of Abdul Malik.

The person laughed and said, ‘ Have you seen anyone who trusted Allah, and Allah has not helped him? Have you ever seen a person who has spread his hand to Allah for help and Allah has sent him disappointed?"

The Imam (a.s.) said, " No!"

And the person disappeared from the view!

About this event Allama Majlisi says, " It was either a saintly personality, an angel or Hazrat Khizr (a.s.)"

SPEAKING FOR THE

TRANQUILITY OF

THE HEART

Allama Majlisi says that such conversations are in no way a remark on the high status of the Imams (a.s.) but are manifestations of *Tadakkar* and spiritual reminder of Allah’s Wish to put the Imam (a.s)’s heart at ease.

One example is that when an erudite scholar’s son expires, people tell him to be patient that Imam Hussain (a.s.) too lost his son in the prime of youth. This is *Tadakkar.* Sermonizing or moralizing is done irrespective of the age of the person who is the subject of this. The person who moralizes can be raw and young and the person he talks to could be highly learned and old! Sometimes it does happen that a child says something and an old and learned person draws benefit from the *Tadakkar* of the infant!

IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.)

TALKS TO

HAZRAT ALI AKBAR (A.S.)

You must have heard that Hazrat Imam Hussain (a.s.), at one of the stages on the journey to Karbala woke up uneasily from his sleep. Hazrat Ali Akbar (a.s.) said, " O father! What is the reason that you are disturbed?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, " I heard a herald announce that this group is advancing towards their death! This journey is for martyrdom and killings." Hazrat Ali Akbar (a.s.) asked, " O father! Are we on the side of righteousness?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, " Definitely! We are on the side of the right!"

Hazrat Ali Akbar (a.s.) rejoined, " If we are the travellers on the path of righteousness, then how good it will be that we sacrifice our lives in the cause of Truth!"

Such words of wisdom from the mouth of the young son soothed the nerves of the Imam (a.s.) and he prayed to Allah to enable the youth to be Righteous!

THE SEVENTEENTH TALK

Bismillahhir Rehman ir Raheem

Innahu laisa lahu sultanun al al lazeena aamanu wa ala Rabbehim yatawakkalun

Verily there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord—Al Nahl 99

TAWAKKAL IS THE

RESULT OF THE KNOWLEDGE, CIRCUMSTANCES AND

THE ACTIONS OF THE PERSON

The scholars and researchers are of opinion that *Tawakkkal* results from three things--- the knowledge of the person, his circumstances and his actions. We shall talk about all the three aspects.

Knowledge : As long as a person is not learned, *Tawakkal* will not be in him. This will depend on three things. The first is *Yaqeen* or firm belief. The person should have absolute belief on Allah's unfathomable power that He is "*Ala kulle shai in Qadeer* (all things are in His power) and " *Qadir ala kullu shai"* (wields power over all things). The most difficult tasks that man is unable to perform with all his capabilities, are very easy of accomplishment by Allah. Nothing is there that is not in His Reach.

WISDOM AND KINDNESS

ON MEN

Yaqeen: Secondly, yaqeen or faith is imperative that Allah is *Alam as sir wal qafiyyat,* He has knowledge of the manifest and the hidden. In other words, He is Omniscient.

Muntaha al shafqat ala ibadehi: Thirdly, the person should have the firm belief that Allah is utmost kind on His creatures. *Momin* is near and dear to Allah. The instinctive love that a mother has for her child is also from Allah. Allah's love for His creatures is thousands of times more than a mother's love for her child. In fact, his love for the creatures is unfathomable. He is the Sustainer, He creates trains, and loves those He has brought up with care. Many examples can be cited about this. But now we are quoting one narration from *Hayat al Quloob* of Allama Majlisi:

Hazrat Nooh (a.s.) cursed his disobedient people. As a result of this curse, all the infidels got drowned in the flood. One angel came to Hazrat Nooh (a.s.). Hazrat Nooh (a.s.) was a potter. At the time when the angel came to him, he was busy on the potters-wheel making goblets and tempering them on fire. The angel bought all the goblets from Hazrat Nooh (a.s.) and started breaking them one after another. Hazrat Nooh (a.s.), surprised and upset, asked him why he was breaking the goblets. The angel said, " What right you have over the things

that I have already paid for?" Hazrat Nooh (a.s.) said, " Don't you know that I had made the goblets with my own hands?" The angel rejoined, " You have only made the goblets, you have not created them! Even then you are upset at my breaking them. When you got so many creatures drowned in the floods, would not Allah, the Creator, have felt upset and sad!" At this, as is quoted in *Alal aash Sharaey,* Hazrat Nooh bowed down his head and so much that he was given the name of Nooh (a.s.) because of this.

THE PROPHET (A.S.)

NEVER CURSED

ANYONE

Allah, therefore, is very kind on His creatures because, one who is the provider of sustenance, has lots of love for those whom He brings up. Allah expresses His displeasure on one of His closest Prophets (a.s.) as to why he had cursed his people and caused their destruction.

The greatness of the Last of the Prophets (a.s.), Hazrat Mohammed (a.s), can be judged from the fact that he never cursed anyone throughout his life. He is therefore, *Rehmat lil Aalameen* or Blessing for all the Worlds! If he had cursed the infidels and polytheists, they would have all perished.

AN EXAMPLE OF

GODLY AFFECTION

One day the infidels caused so much hurt to the Prophet (a.s) that he fell unconscious, and blood was flowing from his face and head. Someone informed Hazrat Khadija (a.s.) that her husband was assaulted by his enemies and caused him grievous injuries. They were wondering whether she would find him alive or not. That day the angels came to the Prophet (a.s.) and asked him his wish. The Prophet (a.s.), who is a blessing for all the worlds, did not

ask for the punishment of the infidels but, to the contrary, he prayed for them in the following words: " O Allah! Guide my people aright!" In addition to this, the Prophet (a.s.) advocated for them that, " they are not aware that I am Your Annunciated Prophet. They are ignorant and I plead not to punish them!"

PEOPLE THEMSELVES

SEEK A PLACE

IN THE HELL

Don't say that when the Prophet (a.s.) is so forgiving, then why Allah had to create the Hell. The creation of the Hell is not contrary to *Al shafqat al al ebad.* Man himself flies away from the way of Allah's love (*Shafqat)* and rightly earns a place in the Hell. *" Wa lakin an naas kanu anfusahum yazlemoon- people themselves inflict hurt on their psyche.* Allah loves them very much and keeps them warned repeatedly about the Hell through the verses of the Quran. He exhorts them to keep away from it. He also warns them against Satan's tricks and that he is the open enemy of men.

In a nutshell, unless you realize that Allah is Omnipotent and Beneficent and has kindness and love for his creatures, you cannot achieve the state of *Tawakkal.*

AFFECTION

ON

A KITTEN

In the Commentary, *Rooh al Bayan,* it is said that someone dreamed of a pious person after his death and inquired about his condition. He said that one good turn had helped him very much. It was winter time. In addition to extreme cold it was raining cats and dogs. In the state of extreme cold he noticed a kitten in search of warmth and shelter. It looked hungry and weak. He took pity on the kitten and picked it up and hid it in his coat of leather and took it home. There he fed the kitten and protected it from cold. When the weather improved, he freed the kitten. Allah had forgiven all his sins because of this good turn of his.

How much Allah must be getting pleased if one did such a good turn to a human being. There is another love much more superior mentioned in the Quran. That is the love for Allah. Allah terms such persons His mehboob or the Beloved.

Therefore, the condition of knowledge is firm belief in affection for Allah and that, because of this affection Allah loves you.

Now the question is that despite all this why we don't depend (*Tawakkal)* on Allah? Is there anyone more dependable than Him in our view? Do we know any personality who is wiser than, stronger than and kinder than Allah? When one's Allah is so forgiving, why should he seek the affection of anyone else!

O Allah! Strengthen our hearts with the strength of belief that we make only you the focus of our expectations! Call only you in times of trouble and whenever Satan creates fears in our heart, we seek your protection! We keep trust only on Your support at every step in our lives. We mould ourselves into total *Momins* following the dictum of " *if you are a momin do Tawakkal on Allah!"*

WHAT SATAN HAS TO DO

WITH THOSE

WHO HAVE

TAWAKKAL

OR

DEPENDENCE

ON

ALLAH!

If you consider your Sustainer, Allah, as the reservoir of all your strength, and thereby become a person with *Tawakkal,* that is, total Dependence on Allah, then Satan dare not have access to your heart! Here we are reminded of the example of the king's camp and the ferocious dog at its entrance. But one who is close to the king, will call from outside and orders would be given for his admittance. Similarly, if one has closeness with the Creator of the Universe, and has *Tawakkal* on Him, then his *Ista-aaza* too will be acceptable and Satan will never come near him.

FRIENDS OF ALLAH

HAVE

NO ANXIETY

FROM SATAN

Men have several enemies. Whenever they become the people of *Tawakkal,* depending totally on Allah, then all the enemies unite to oppose them. Confronting so many strong enemies is not easy. There is only one way of subduing them. That is *Tawakkal (Dependence)* on Allah. When one depends totally on Allah, then Satan's fears and temptations would mean trifling to him.

"*The friends of Allah neither fear anyone nor do they face any sadness or misery.*

BLADE OF

DRIED GRASS

OR STRAW

Unfortunate are those hapless persons who have no place of succor. They are just like the blades of straw that fly around with the gusts of the wind. Satan will rest only after destroying such persons. In contrast to these, the one who is powerful has access to the Omni Potent Allah, and only Allah is his succor.

Our lives are fast running out of time. We should not remain deprived of *Tawakkal on Allah.*

TAWAKKAL

ON ALLAH

IS

NECESSARY

IN

THE HEREAFTER TOO

As it is necessary to Trust on Allah during our worldly lives, then, whatever is in store for us in the Hereafter too we shall have to depend on Allah for his

Beneficence. For this *Tawakkal* is most important. Allah is the Master of all our affairs--- in the grave, in the interregnum (*Barzaq),* in Qiamat (the Doomsday) and we have to depend on Him in all these stages. It is Allah who brought us from nothingness to the world and has been our Guardian till the Resurrection (*Me-aad)* !

THE EIGHTEENTH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innahu laisa lahu sultanun al al lazeena aamanu wa ala Rabbehim yata wakkaloon

Verily there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord- an-nahl 99

TAWAKKAL IN UNITY

OF ALLAH

Momin has trust on (*Tawakkal)* and faith only in Allah. *Wa al Allaha fa taakkalu in kuntum momineen—If you are men of Faith, then Trust only on Allah.* The importance of belief on the Unity of Allah is that Trust (*Tawakkul*)

is required to be placed only on Allah! Besides Allah one should not depend on the help from any other human being or anything else.

If the faith on the Unity of Allah is absolute, then people will not have any feelings of false pride. Fears, doubts and pride are the traits of those who are weak in their Faith. *Momin* is never swayed in any circumstances because the reservoir of the strength of his heart is frrom Allah.

The result of Practicing Faith on *Tawheed,* Unity of Allah, is that in matters of fear, hope and on occasions of confusion, the Trust on Allah (*Tawakkal)* is redoubled and the faith of the *Momin* is further strengthened.

TRUST O ALLAH

IS

INTELLECTUALLY

BINDING

Momin trusting on Allah is doubtlessly justified. Even when matters are in his control, there should be implicit Trust on Allah. Only saying that one Trusts Allah is not sufficient. Saying *'Alaihi tawakkalto wa ilahi uneeeb'* or '*Uffawezo amri il Allah',* that is one leaves all his affairs to the trust of Allah is not sufficient. But for this there is necessity of *Haall* (rapture) and the state of dedication of the heart. One should remain steadfast on the three aspects of *Tawakkal--- Ilm (*knowledge), *haall* (rapture) and *amal* (action). The foundation is no doubt laid on *Ilm* and the reality that is achieved through *Amal* (action) is *Haal* or rapturously, and elatedly Trusting on Allah in all the affairs.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE

TO BE

MUTAWAKKIL OR

RESIGNED TO THE WILL

OF ALLAH

What is the reality of *Tawakkal* and how to achieve that? The root of the word *Tawakkal* (Trust) is *Wakala* (counsel or representation). The person who appoints a counsel is called *muwakkil* and the counsel who is entrusted to take care of his affairs is the *wakil.*

Make Allah your *wakil* and Trust all your affairs to Him. This is the meaning of ' *Fattakhazhu wakila—make Him your Wakil'*

BELIEF IN

PRACTICING-FAITH

ON

UNITY OF ALLAH

We have already said that *Tawakkal (Trust)* depends on knowledge, rapture and action. But the foundation is the knowledge. Here knowledge means implicit practicing- faith in the Unity of Allah that every gain made or loss suffered by the person should be attributed to the Will of Allah. For such a belief, there must be arguments in support that the foundation of the Faith is firm.

Is it possible to derive profits from others than Allah? No, never! Every profit accrued is either directly or through Allah. Food, clothing and all the paraphernalia of marital life and all the gains of the spiritual life is at Allah's Wish!

OBSERVE THE ACT

OF

DRINKING WATER

Someone gives you a tumbler of water. From where this water has come? Whose property is it? Who has made it? Who has fetched it? Who has given him the strength to fetch the water? Who has given him the initiative to quench your thirst?

Therefore, if one thinks about a glass of water, he will know that the ultimate provider is none else than Allah!

THE DRESS TOO

IS

PROVIDED BY ALLAH

Does the dress that we wear, from its rudimentary state to that when it is ready for use, has any initiator other than Allah? Just imagine who has created the cotton? Who made the hands that contribute during the stages of its conversion to fabric? Who gave wisdom to the weavers to develop skills at their trade? When we seriously think, we realize that --- *Ala ilalla tasayyar il umoor--- every bounty is from Him!*

IT IS ALLAH

WHO

WARDS OFF TROUBLES

It is not possible for anyone, other than Allah, to keep a person out of harms way. Imagine, who gives cure to a person suffering from an ailment? Do the medicaments and the physician give him the cure? Or the real cause of the cure is somewhere else to find? Who gave the knowledge to the physician? Who controls his faculties of diagnosis? In fact, the real diagnosis comes from Allah and the physician is only an instrument for this.

PHYSICIAN

OR

KILLER!

In Shiraz, during an epidemic of measles, a physician's young son was afflicted with the disease. Since he was under the treatment of his own father, a successful practitioner, there was no possible flaw in the treatment. But the diagnosis went wrong and the medicines administered to the lad too were not effective. The result was that he died.

None can come in the way of Allah's will. The knowledge acquired by a physician is effective only when Allah wishes the patient to recover. The medicine is effective only when Allah wishes it to be so.

As long as one doesn't understand these things, it is not possible for a man to comprehend the reality of the ultimate control of things. If you connect the ways and means to self and forget the Cause of the Causes (Allah) then you are ignorant of *la ila ha il Allah* because the ultimate control over everything is His. Whatever is there, and whatever happens, is through Him.

IN ALL MATTES

ALLAH'S WILL

PREVAILS

Therefore, whatever benefits you derive from anyone, or the harm that comes to you, are all with the Will of Allah. If someone clears his debt with you, it is

Allah who Has motivated him to keep his promise. Who has taken out love for wealth from people's mind? It is Allah. Allah has termed wealth a *Maal.* It is called *Maal* because the hearts are attracted (*maa-el)* towards it! *" When the importance of Maal is in the heart, only Allah's intervention compels him to clear your debt!"*

INTERCESSION

TOO

IS

NECESSARY

The strength and reservoir of your heart is only Allah and your total trust should only be on Him. We shall talk about it later on. For the present we are discussing about knowledge. It is necessary to get a better understanding about it from the Quran and the Traditions. No power other than Allah has the capability to profit or harm anyone if Allah Wishes otherwise.

TAWAKKAL

COMES WITH

KNOWLEDGE

If the knowledge is correct, *Tawakkal* results. Allah has the same relation with men as of an attorney with his client.

If a person has to seek justice, he will be grossly incompetent to deal with the matter on his own. He feels the need of such an attorney who is well versed with the law and has expertise of handling such cases. For this purpose the person makes inquiries with friends to suggest names of the most suitable lawyers. He will then find out about the track record of the lawyer. It is quite possible that a lawyer might be having all the necessary qualifications but lacks the intelligence and tact to handle his case. Another important aspect to be considered while commissioning a lawyer is to know that he has sympathy for his clients that he gets the verdict in their favor and doesn't become the cause

of headaches in the future. If the lawyer is not kind and is a person who can sell his conscience, then it is quite possible that he extracts more fees from the client and might even turn the tables against him.

If one gets an attorney fitting all these requirements, it is fine and the client is now certain that his matter is in safe hands. The same is the matter of the *Haal* (rapture) and exhiliration for *Tawakkal.*

NAYM

AL

WAKIL

Is there anyone more befitting of the above mentioned conditions than Allah.? Besides Allah, can anyone have a total comprehension of our expedience and problems confronting us and fully competent to tackle them that both our worldly lives and the Hereafter are taken care of.

Do we consider anyone, other than Allah, empowered to derive benefit for or ward off harm from us. We know that the claim of *Ala kulle shai in Qadeer* cannot be made by anyone other than Allah!

Is anyone kinder than Allah on His creatrues?

No doubt Allah is the reservoir of all kindness. He is the fountainhead of love and affection. The love and affection of the parents or that of anyone else is like a drop when compared to the love that Allah has for his creatures.

Therefore it is quite natural that when I turn to Him for help in my matters, trust Him in total, and accept Him as *Naym al Vakil* then happiness will be generated in my heart. When I seek and depend only on Allah's help to ward off some anticipated difficulty, then my worry will be removed because I know that my Omni potent *Naym al vakil* is on my side! No power can cause harm to me.

Therefore: all troubles, fears and hopes are because of a person not having *Tawakkal* on Allah. When there is no feeling of *Tawakkal* in a person, then what is the use of saying, " *Alaihi tawakkalto wa ilaihi muneeb"!*

MUTAWAKKAL

DOESN'T FEAR

OTHER THAN

ALLAH

The people of *Tawheed* (monotheists) are those who, when they are threatened by saying that their enemies have united against them, their Faith in Allah enhances and they say, " Allah is our best support. He is the best of attorneys! *(Al lazeena qala lahum annaas an an naasa qad jamaulaka fa aqshauhum fazadahum eemana wa qaalu hasban Allah wa naym al wakil.*

In fact these are the people who have truly accepted Allah as their vakil. They are not like us that we either uttered the words or read them in the Quran. Quran is not just to read but the purpose of its revelation is to read it correctly, to understand its contents and acting on them. If the ecstasy of *Tawakkal* and its understanding do not arise in the person then any amount o reading the Book will be futile. Is it not a pity that we read the Holy Quran our entire lives but don't understand the three conditions prescribed by Allah for us. With our oral expressions we have accepted Him as *Naym al vakil* but in practice we have not deemed Him our vakil from the heart. If we had done it from the heart, we would not have the need to look aroud for smaller vakils!

ONE WHO

EXPECTS HELP FROM

OTHER THAN ALLAH

FAILS

In *Umdat ad Dayee* and *Usool e Kaafi* it is recorded that Mohammed bin Ajlan once was highly in debts. He thought of going to the administrator of Medina,

Hassan bin Zaid, to seek his help. On the way Hazrat Mohammed bin Abdallah bin Zain al Abedeen (a.s.) met him. He asked ibne Ajlan about his problem. He replied he was on the way to the emir to find a way out of his debts. The reply was, " I have heard a long *Haddet e Qudsi* from my cousin Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s). In that there is a sentence about your problem: " By my Dignity and Majesty! I nullify the hopes of those persons who depend on the support of anyone other than Me!"

" Did you insist on Allah to give you eyes to see, give you ears to hear? When these things were necessary for your creation, Allah has given to you without asking for them. Will he not give you help if you ask for it now? "

Mohammed Ajlan said, " Narrate the *Hadith* once again!" He repeated it. Mohammed Ajlan wanted to hear it a third time, and so was it repeated!

Mohammed Ajlan was now convinced. He said, " I have understood! I entrust my affairs to Allah!"

At the end of the narration it is recorded that within a short span of time all the worries of Mohammed bin Ajlan had vanished.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

HAVE MADE US

DEAF AND DUMB

We have not reached the stage of *Tauheed* (monotheism) where one totally trusts Allah.

It is said in *Dua e Kumail,* " O One who is my only support!" But do we really, in full senses, say the truth when we recite it? Do we really and truly consider Allah as our only support! The fact is that the circumstances and worldly matters do not allow us to directly communicate with Allah that we understand the real purport of *La haula wa la quwatta illa billah.* You must have heard that saying these words is like having the key to Heaven in one’s hands. The one who repeats these words will earn great Rewards in the Hereafter. Does one really get the reward and the key to Heaven by mere repetition of these words?

No. It is not like that. But if a person does it with total dedication of heart then the doors to the Heaven would certainly open for him. But the words coming from the heart's tongue takes a lot of effort.

Generally a person thinks that he himself and the circumstances are the reasons for *Houl and Quwwat*. With the tongue he says. '*La haula wa la quwwata illa billah'* but in reality he means, ' *la haula wa la quwwata illa bi wa bila asbab"*

If the aim is to achieve the state of *Tawakkal* then we shall do such acts that our hearts should get the feelings that we can follow the faith in its true spirit. Remember! The correct use of time at our disposal and the true purpose of our lives are to be conversant with the laws of the faith.

TAWAKKAL

HAS

STAGES

We have said that *Tawakkal* requires that one establish with Allah the relationship of the client with his attorney. This is the first stage of *Tawakkal.* To achieve the higher stages, keen efforts are required.

If you wish to study the natural *tawakkal,* you must observe the dependence of a child on its mother. It rivets its attention on the mother for all the needs. It cries for its mother when hungry or it trpis and falls down on the ground. When a child comes to a situation of getting beaten by his companions, he cries for the help of his mother. This is the natural stage of *Tawakkal.*

If we acquire *Tawakkal* of this intensity for Allah, then we would have achieved a moderate level of Trust on Allah! The third type of *Tawakkal* is when a dead body is in the hands of the person who gives him the final bath. This is not the place to dwell in detail about this. The reference is only to

remind us that if some of us achieve the capability of *Tawakkal,* then the instinct of pride will not touch our heart because of this achievement. We must remember that there are many stages of *Tawakkal* still to acquire.

TAWAKKAL

MUST BE

PERPETUAL

Another important point is that the *Tawakkal* must be perpetual. It is not that sometimes one swears by *Tawakkal* and at others he acts otherwise. The true state of *Tawakkal* is that one trusts Allah at every step in his life. He should not depend on anyone other than Allah for his matters. This is possible with perpetual supplication, prayer and effort.

You have seen that the child looks at the mother with gratefulness. He doesn't look at anyone else to ward away harm to him. Even if he is helped by someone else , he will be thankful only to the mother. Can we, at least, be as much grateful to our true Benefactor, Allah, to the extent that a child is to his mother!

THE NINETEENTH TALK

Bismilla hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innahu laisa lahu sultanun al al lazeena aamanu wa ala Rabbehim yatwakkaloon

Verily there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord- An Nahl 99

SORROWS AND HAPPINESS

ARE

FROM ALLAH

Tawakkal requires that people should understand that on everything is Allah's suzerainty and all things big and small are His. All that happens is with His wish and command. As it is said in the *Surat an Najm* giving examples of certain things it is said," *He (Allah) is the one who makes (people) laugh and cry."* This means that it is Allah who controls the causes for men becoming happy and sad. He provides wealth and riches to people and makes them prosperous. The land on which we walk also belongs to Allah. The dwellings in which we live and all the paraphernalia therein belong to Him only. We should have absolute Faith in His Sovereignty over everything.

WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

FAITH OF

TAWHEED

IS NOT

PRACTICAL

As long as one doesn't have faith in the facts mentioned, it is not possible to understand the reality of *La haula wa la quwatta illa billa.* Man has to understand that the authority of anyone, other than Allah, on anything is totally negated. The word "*La*" asserts that there is no power in the hands of anyone other than Allah . He alone is the reservoir and fountainhead of power and is the Creator and thw Possessor.

There is no permanent class or status for the creatures. The ability of man to use the tongue and modulate words is because of the Will of Allah.

THE MOUTH OPENED

BUT DIDN'T

CLOSE

Sometime ago, a woman was brought to a hospital. Her lower jaw was hanging downward. They said that she opened her mouth wide to yawn. Ever since then she was unable to close her mouth.

It is true that making both the jaws meet is in His Power! The summary of this discussion is that in matters man doesn't have total control and in everything the wish of Allah is Supreme. The matters that are unseen will become visible only with Allah's Wish. To understand this phenomenon, it will need deep thinking and wisdom.

THE IMPORTANCE OF

SURAT

AL TAUHEED

About a third of the contents of the Holy Quran is about *Tauheed* or the Unity of Allah. This highlights the importance of the verse of *Tauheed* that is specifically pertaining to the fact of the Unity of Allah. According to some authentic traditions, the felicity of reciting this surat is equal to reciting a third of the Quran.

Who deserves this felicity? The person deserving this reward is one who practices *Taqwa* or absolute piety. He can recite this verse thrice and get felicity equal to the recitation of the complete Book.

As we have said earlier, saying *la haula wa la quwatta illa billa* is like having the key to the Heaven in one's hands. But this privilege too is only for those who are practitioners of true *Taqwa* and have a complete understanding of and absolute faith on *Tauheed.* How could an ignorant person with aimless recitation of *La haul* deserve to get the key to the Heaven.

HAZRAT IBRAHIM (A.S.)

IS A SOURCE OF

PRIDE FOR

THOSE

WHO TRUST ON ALLAH

The first stage of *Tawakkal* is that people should not think of Allah like a worldly attorney to whom they trust their matters with full confidence. The second stage is that the person trusts on Allah at least as much as a child puts his trust on the mother. The third stage concerns the privileged persons whose wealth and possession is only on the Will of Allah. They do only that which has the express approval of Allah!

Hazrat Ibrahim Khaleelallah (a.s.) had achieved the highest degree of *Tawakkal.* When the men of Nimrod wanted to consign him to the fire, Hazrat Jibraeel came and asked him, " If you have any requirement, please tell me!" Hazrat Ibrahim said, " I do have a requirement, but I will not ask it of you!" Jibraeel asked, " From whom, then?" Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) replied, " He is aware of all my needs! I need not ask him. He is all-wise and He sees everything! Whatever He wishes for me, I too wish for the same!"

HAVE WE

EVER

TOLD THE TRUTH

We must be uttering a thousand times the word *Hasban Allah wa naym al wakil* (for me Allah is sufficient and is the best of attorneys). But in reality have we ever trusted to Him, wholly or partially, our worldly matters or affairs of the Hereafter?

Have we ever acted upon the injunction of the Holy Quran---*Fattaqazahu vakila*--- to make Allah our attorney? If the reply to this question is in the negative, then what is the need of complaining and living in doubts and fears. Believe me! There is only one reason for all the trouble. That is, paucity of faith and belief.

A MUTAWAKKIL

IS

NEVER GREEDY

If someone acquires *Tawakkal* in day to day life, then he will be free of greed and avarice in his needs and wants.

During *Hajjat al Wida,* The Last Haj, the Prophet (a.s) held the threshold of Kaba and turning towards his companions said, " *Rooh al Amin,* Jibraeel, has revealed to my heart that no person will die till the sustenance earmarked for him in this world is not exhausted. This means that the person will not die before consuming the last morsel of food meant for him. Therefore, fear Allah and avoid greed and avarice, lest you involve yourselves in illegitimate (*Haram*) . The one who reclines on the worldly matters, he will never be sated with however much he gets!"

This doesn't mean that one should not strive for search of livelihood. Do strive, but always with *Tawakkal* in mind.

DEPENDENCE ON

THE WAKIL

IS NECESSARY

Consider this example with care and attention. Suppose you are involved in some legal problem. Dealing with this problem personally is beyond you. We suggested to you to look for a wise and competent lawyer and act on his advice. Then this act of yours will not be contrary to the requirements of *Tawakkal* but also the attorney's advice will be binding on you because he wants things that way and your action also in accord, because he wishes to set your matters right.

This example proves that following the attorney's advice implicitly is in accordance with the requirement of *Tawakkal.* Similarly Allah reforms the affairs of people through the circumstances (*asbaab*) created by Him.

Cure from ailments is at Allah's Wish, but He also wants people to go to a physician and get medicines prescribed. He has exhorted people not to neglect

this important matter in their lives. Similarly about the affairs of the Hereafter Allah says that for qualifying for the Heaven, a person's own actions will be the yardstick for judgement. *" Laisa lil insaan illa ma sa-aa".* You should not depend only on your prayers for deliverance, but also on His Munificence and Kindness. Don't brood too much on your good deeds that it gives rise to the instinct of pride that might go against you. The best course for you is to implicitly follow the Commands of Allah.

A SHOP WITHOUT GOODS

ON

ALLAH'S SUPPORT

This is the reason that when the toilers stir out of their homes in search of work, they say, " O Sustainer! We strive for earning the day's square meals. You must give abundance!" These words reflect the spirit of *Tauheed.*

It is said that in Medina a person came to Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) and complained of penury. The Imam said that when he reached home in Koofa, he should take a shop on rent and sit there. The man said, " I have no money to invest on goods!" The Imam replied, " Do whatever you are asked to do!" The man complied, rented a shop and started sitting there every day. After a few days a person came to him with some goods and asked him to sell them on the basis of a pre determined commission. The owner of the goods said that he was leaving the goods in the shop on consignment basis of sell-and-pay!

Another person came with some more goods and there was a flow of suppliers of goods to the shop. Buyers too started flocking the shop. The affairs of the person took a turn towards prosperity!

IDLE YOUTH

IS

AN ENEMY OF ALLAH

There are some people who, on hearing that one must put Trust on Allah, wrongly think that they need not make any efforts because Allah will provide their sustenance. They are absolutely wrong. They must work in obedience to Allah's injunction for earning a fair living and not only in obedience to the instructions given at the place of work.

Whatever work a true Muslim does is only in Obedience to Allah. He knows the Prophet (a.s)'s exhortation, " An idle youth is Allah's enemy" Therefore he goes out in search of his livelihood.

THE LEARNED GET

SUSTENANCE FROM

GHAIB

Someone might raise an objection that why the people of learning don't stir out in search of livelihood? The truth is that the nature of work of a seeker of knowledge (*Talib e Ilm*) is different from that of other people. It may not be

possible that a person wants to train himself in jurisprudence and does other trades for a livelihood. He has to spend all his time in seeking knowledge on the matters of the Faith. Allah arranges their sustenance from--- *min hais au yahtasib*--- a place about which there is no inkling! Therefore, it has been narrated that excepting the seeker of knowledge, Allah has provided livelihood for all the creatures from the material resources of the world.

TAWAKKAL DEPENDS

ON

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

One very important sign of *Tawakkal* is not the presence of any element of avarice in the person. The second sign is that when he meets different people, there is no change in his attitude. In certain cases persons think that they are men of *Tawakkal,* and imagine that they are totally dedicated to Allah, but when they meets with failure in certain worldly affairs, they get dejected. This is a sign that they were depending more on worldly concerns than on Allah. If there is total dependence on Allah, then one would know that whatever happened to them is with His express Wish and thank Allah under all circumstances!

TALK ABOUT

WEAKNESS OF

FAITH

Blaming or praising the circumstances are both the signs of lack of *Tawakkal* in a person and a proof of the weakness of his Faith. . Because if the Faith on Unity of Allah (*Tawheed*) is firm, then *Tawakkal* will definitely be there. *Tawakkal* is always reflected in the words and deeds, likes and dislikes, of a person.

If someone enjoys a gain for some reason and, instead of being grateful to Allah for His Blessing, is only thankful to the favorable circumstances for his success, then he is a *Mushrik* or polytheist. Also, because of the circumstances,

if he fails in his efforts, and blames the circumstances for his misfortune, then he considers only the circumstances as his *Mushkil Kusha* or his trouble-shooter and not the Will of Allah. This is a general failing of the human beings.

But one who puts his total trust on Allah, he doesn't depend on the circumstances for the success of his tasks. If he fails in his efforts after due trials, he resigns himself to the fact that Allah willed it that way. Although the unfavorable circumstances might have been the cause of his failure, he thanks Allah that he believes the circumstances to be under the Power of the Almighty.

ACQUIRING TAWAKKAL IS MANDATORY

Tawakkal is mandatory on the Muslims. Neglecting it will be tantamount to not abiding by the mandatory action. As implicit faith on *Tawheed* is compulsory, *Tawakkal* too is necessary for a Muslim. It is a fact that when a person is firm in his belief of the Unity of Allah, he instinctly becomes a practitioner of *Tawakkal.* Such a person is endowed with all the requirements of Faith. *Eemaan bil Tauheed* means that he trusts all his affairs to the Wish of Allah. He expects help only from Allah, fears Him and puts total Trust in Him.

The researcher Ardbeli says in "*Zibdat al Bayan"* that the Command of Allah about *Tawakkal* is not specifically for the Prophet (a.s) but it is in general for all human beings. The Holy Verse "*Fattakhazhu wakila"* is for everyone and the witness for this is borne by the other verses of the Holy Quran wherein the populace is addressed in this manner: *Wa al Allaha fatawakkalu in kuntum momineen—All of you should Trust Allah if you are Momins.* Therefore this is a general injunction for all Muslims.

Here it is possible that one might say that such injunctions in the Quran are just a part of the code of moral values. Then the injunction of believing in *La ilaha il Allah* might face the same doubt. The meaning of *La ilaha il Allah* is that *Rab (Lord), Maabod (Creater), Mudabbir (Wise),* Worthy of Worship and All Pervading is only Allah and none else. This is the Practical Tawheed (*Tawheed e Afaali*). Is it possible that even those who do not have faith in this might not be questioned for their lack of faith! No! In all circumstances firm faith on *Tawheed* is compulsory.

TAWAKKAL

AND

COUNSEL

The researcher Ardbeli says that in terms of the Holy Verse "*Fatawakkal al Allah"* it is binding on every *Momin* to take advice from others in all matters. But he should also not think that the best solution for his problems is only in the advice he has obtained from others. In fact, he should depend on Allah that He puts the right advice on the tongues of the advisers.

If because of good advice you succeed in your task, then don't say that the desirable result is only because of the advice. You should think that Allah had guided your advisers aright! If you are unsuccessful in your efforts, despite all the good advice, think that it was Allah's Wish.

Therefore, whether you acted on your own intuition or the advice of others, hope for Allah's Help in your matters. Always ask your advisers to give their right suggestions mindful of Allah's Wish in the matter.

IF THERE IS

NO TAWAKKAL

THERE IS

NO FAITH

Ardbeli says that one who has not acquired *Tawakkul* has deprived himself of Faith. Because Allah says," *Wa al allahi fa tawakkalu in kuntum momineen- If you are Momin then trust on Allah."* This proves that if there is no *Tawakkal* there is no *Eemaan* or Faith. This proves that the crux of the faith is to believe that Allah is (*musabib al asbab*) the Causer of the Causes and the basic requirement of the Faith is to Trust on Allah. If you rate your own view or the advice of others more than the Will of Allah then you have distanced yourself from Him. In these circumstances you have ceased to be a *Momin,* then what is the question of your practicing *Tawakkal.*

TALL CLAIMS

BELITTLE

A PERSON

A person, sixty years of age, had claims of being an adept at everything, was particularly proud of his knowledge of medicine. He claimed that he was the Aristotle of the time. He proudly said that he maintained his body according to the rigid norms of medicine and that he would certainly live with good health for the next forty years.

One day the worthy made a meal of yogurt and cucumber around the time of *Duhr.* He was devoid of teeth that he had already lost. He developed a heart-ache after his meal. He thought that the pain was due to the cold. He made a self-diagnosis that he was chronic sufferer of biliousness, and the yogurt he had eaten was not sufficient to curb the bile. He therefore drank some lime- juice. He thought that this treatment would give him comfort. But by *Asr* he was really put to rest! He had expired!

DON'T TRUST

YOUR OWN

INTUITION

One who depends only on his intuition, he thinks that there is no power over him that has Wisdom of all the matters. Such a person suffers from lack of Faith.

You must ensure that whenever you decide to do anything, depend on your own wisdom, advice of friends and trust the matter to Allah. Don't ever think that the reason for doing any task is permanent. We never know what is the Wish of Allah.

Briefly, if there is no *Tawakkal,* there isn't Faith. The meaning of *Tawakkal* is depending on other. If a person is the practitioner of *Tawakkal,* he trusts his matters to Allah. If he doesn't Trust Allah then he depends on others for the solution to his problems.

THE TWENTIETH TALK

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Raheem

Innahu laisa lahu sultanun al al lazeena aamanu wa ala Rabbehim yatawakkaloon

Verily there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord- An Nahl 99

In the last talk we have discussed the observation of the Researcher Ardbeli on the subject of *Tawakkal.* The 158th Verse of Surat Aale Imran says:

Wa shawirhum fil amre faiza azamta fatawakkal al allahi in allaha yohibbul mutawakkeleen

But when thou art resolved, then put thou thy trust in God; For God loveth those who trust (in Him)—Al e Imran 158

Consult with others about your work, when you make up your mind after that, then trust on Allah and go ahead with your task. About this Researcher Ardbeli has said that whether the basis of the decision to go ahead with the task is of your thinking or the advice of others, *Tawakkal* on Allah is very important. Whatever the result, success or failure, don't think that it was because of the good or bad advice you followed, but try to resign to the will of Allah.

Whatever task you want to accomplish, whether for seeking some benefit or for warding away some trouble, have *Tawakkal* on Allah for that matter and don't depend only on your own decision and the advice of friends. Remember your friends too, like you, are fallible beings. " Whomsoever you call for help, besides Allah, is a creature of Allah like you." Therefore it is necessary that the

fountainhead of the strength of your heart should be none other than Allah. It must be remembered the wisdom and vision of men is limited and may not have the comprehension of all the connected facts.

We don’t suggest that you should not consult nor do we ask you to refrain from acting on the advice of your well-wishers. But you must keep all your hopes only on Allah and pray to Him that He puts the best alternative for your welfare on the lips of your advisers. Allah says, " One who does *Istakhara* (seeks good from Allah) will never be in trouble." The reason for this is that one will not be aware of what is in store for him. He seeks Allah’s guidance because He knows everything about all the matters.

ISTAKHARA

AND

TAWAKKAL

It has come in the narrations about Imam Zain al Abedeen (a.s.) that whenever he had any important task to perform, like buying a house, marriage or need for travelling, we would repeat the following words 200 times:

Astakhair Allahi berehmatehi fi aafia

And, then, according to his own thinking he would act.

The Researcher Ardbeel says that because of *Tawakkal,* it is mandatory on Muslims that they leave all their affairs in the trust of Allah and resign themselves to His wish. For example, a farmer sows seeds in his fields trusting in Allah that he gets a good crop and returns for his hard toil. When you succeed in any task, count it as Allah’s wish and not only the result of your own efforts. If you get the feeling of pride for you success, it might be tantamount to be termed practitioner of polytheism (*shirk).*

It should be your faith that you are only an instrument to do the task, but its results are not in your hands. Your duty is to knock at the door of Allah and make efforts to create circumstances for the fulfillment of the task.

Whatever work a man does, his faith should be that fulfillment and accomplishment of the job is at the discretion of Allah. The erudite scholars of

Islam have said and, Allama Tabari too says in his commentary, *Majma al Bayan,* that one should submit to Allah his affairs in such a manner that the thought of his person gets obliterated in the process. *Ja al an nafs kal maadoom—think that your psyche is defunct.*

A farmer, after sowing the seeds of oats in his fields, keeps all his hopes for a good crop on Allah and awaits His Wish. *Innallaha huwal Razzaq—the Sustainer is only Him.*

All men, in their affairs, must have such faith in Allah.

EVERYTHING

HAPPENS

WITH THE

WISH OF ALLAH

As a farmer is aware that his crop is not only the result of his personal endeavors because lots of crops fail because of several reasons and also are destroyed by natural calamities as well. Similarly a trader should know that the profit in his business is not only because of his skills in the trade. As a matter of fact the labor of the farmer and the skilfull investment of the trader are because of Allah's Support and Wish. Allah is, no doubt, the creator and the Master of everything in the Universe. If His Wish was not favorable to them, all the efforts of the farmer and the trader could have gone to waste. Therefore, man should put his implicit Trust in Allah, otherwise he will not get anything other than failure and disappointment.

TAWAKKAL

IN

TIMES OF

DANGER

It is He who gives relief from harm and danger. To face the enemy it is necessary to manufacture arms and strengthen oneself. But success in defence too is only at His pleasure. Therefore, to protect one's life, property, honor and specially the Faith, your total dependence must be on Allah.

Tawakkal doesn't mean that one need not make efforts to strife for material benefits, or to strive to ward off dangers and leave everything to the care of Allah. We have reiterated on the matter several times that when the attorney tells his client to gather all the relevent documentation and evidence himself, he has to do it. When the attorney has all the data on the causes of the litigation, he can successfully handle the case. The client cannot sleep away. He has to follow up the proceedings of the case. Similarly for defence against an enemy, one has to acquire and procure the necessary arms. Don't also think that making available the arms relieves you of action. Defence has to be done by you yourself. But the reservoir and the fountainhead of the strength of your heart is the support of Allah whose pleasure is essential for victory and success.

IGNORANT

TAWAKKAL

Many years ago in Samara there was literally an invasion by hordes of scorpions. They started emerging from every hole and crevice, every door and window. All the students fled from the schools. One student did an *Istakhara* whether he could stay put in the school. Somehow, the *Istakhara* came out favorable for staying. Therefore the student stayed on at the madrassa. He slept there in the night. In the morning his cortege had be taken out from the premises.

This is an ignorant act that in the name of *Tawakkal,* expose oneself to danger. The right thing would have been to flee from the place of danger in *Tawakkal* of Allah.

As *Tawakkal* is necessary, so is the effort to earn a livelihood is necessary. Similarly putting ones conscience in danger too is Haram. Allah issues His Orders through the circumstances. Sometimes He does it without any recourse to circumstances to prove His Omnipotence!

IMAM

JAFAR E SADIQ

AND

THE TIGER

Imam Jafar e Sadiq (a.s.) was proceeding with a group from Koofa for performing the Haj. On the way a tiger confronted them. The people in the group didn't have the courage to face it. The Imam (a.s) himself went forward and waved to the tiger to go away. It turned and went away. Then the Imam (a.s.) adressed the surprised group: " If you too were free of sins, you could have done what I was able to do! Even the wild animal would have obeyed you."

The researcher Ardbeli says that at such times the Imam, through inspiration (*Ilham)* knows that Allah will give relief in such situations without any reason. He also knows that such acts are exceptional. Therefore, they cannot be applied everywhere as a rule.

OTHER MEANINGS

OF

TAWAKKAL

We have already mentioned that *Tawakkal* is the pursuance of legitimate affairs and dependence on Allah. A question might arise in the minds that in some books *Tawakkal* has been mentioned in other senses than trust on Allah. An example is that" a *Momin doesn't fear Allah".* Does *Tawakkal e Wajib* or mandatory Tawakkal require one not to fear a wolf or a formidable enemy. Does it also require the person not to fear penury and disease.

In another place it is said that a man of *Tawakkal* must know that the Master of all gain or loss is none other than Allah. In another place it is said that one should not expect anything from anyone but Allah. The true sense of *Tawakkal* is not derived from these statements.

THE EIXSTENCE

OF CAUSE

IS

NOT PERMANENT

The researcher Ardbeli says that explanation for such narrationss is necessary. Not seeking anything from anyone would only mean that the person from whom one obtains anything is not the Ultimate Provider. If one needs bread, he should not think that the baker is the sustainer (*Raziq).* The way one pleads for things with Allah, one should not do the same way with anyone else. Otherwise it would be *Shirk* or polytheism.

These days there is a story taking rounds in Tehran that some people are propagating the Wahabi Sect in Tehran. They say that saying "Ya Mohammed" and "Ya Ali" is *Shirk.* In support of their claim they quote the verse, " *Other than Allah whosoever you call are Allah's creatures like you"* They also quote "*Don't call anyone else with Allah".*

These are ignorant persons who do not seem to know the meaning of prayer (*Dua).*

CALLING SOMEONE

OTHER THAN

ALLAH

The meaning of dua or prayer is calling or summoning someone. Just calling and summoning is not forbidden. But doing it in a manner that Allah is called is not desirable. The call that is specifically associated with Allah is *Dua. If a creature is called in this manner, it will be* Shirk. Cure from a disease has to be asked for from Allah. If the same thing is asked of from a physician, it can be termed *Shirk.* From the physician one can only ask for diagnosing the ailment and prescribing the medicines. The intercession (*Tawassul) of the Ahl al Bayt*

(a.s) falls under the same category. If someone pleads to Hazrat Abul Faz il Abbas as one would plead with Allah, then it would be *Shirk.*

But none do like this. Everyone thinks that Hazrat Abbas is the intercessor on their behalf.

Therefore, the meaning of *Tawakkal* is that other than Allah none else should be termed as the provider. Consider everyone under Allah's will and pleasure. One should depend only on Allah. Don't the people who object to saying "Ya Mohammed", "Ya Ali" realize that everyday they call several persons other than Allah!